

ALTA
SERIES

ALL ON ACCOUNT
OF POLLY

PRICE 25 CENTS

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY CHICAGO.

DENISON'S ACTING PLAYS

Partial List of Successful and Popular Plays. Large Catalogue Free.
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Heiress of Hoetown, 3 acts, 2 hrs. (25c)	8	4
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Honor of a Cowboy, 4 acts, 2½ hrs. (25c)	13	4
Indian Days, 1 hr. (50c)	5	2
In Plum Valley, 4 acts, 2¼ hrs. (25c)	6	4
Iron Hand, 4 acts, 2 hrs. (25c)	5	4
Jayville Junction, 1½ hrs. (25c)	14	17
Kingdom of Heart's Content, 3 acts, 2¼ hrs. (25c)	6	12
Lexington, 4 acts, 2¼ h. (25c)	9	4
Light Brigade, 40 min. (25c)	10	
Little Buckshot, 3 acts, 2¼ hrs. (25c)	7	4
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Mirandy's Minstrels. (25c)	Optnl.	
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Old Oaken Bucket, 4 acts, 2 hrs. (25c)	8	6
Old School at Hick'ry Holler, 1¼ hrs. (25c)	12	9
On the Little Big Horn, 4 acts, 2½ hrs. (25c)	10	1
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Prairie Rose, 4 acts, 2½ hrs. (25c)	7	4
Rustic Romeo, 2 acts, 2¼ hrs. (25c)	10	12
School Ma'am, 4 acts, 1¼ hrs.	6	5
Scrap of Paper, 3 acts, 2 hrs.	6	6
Soldier of Fortune, 5 acts, 2½ h.	8	3
Southern Cinderella, 3 acts, 2 hrs. (25c)	7	
Third Degree, 40 min. (25c)	12	
Those Dreadful Twins, 3 acts, 2 hrs. (25c)	6	4
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FARCES, COMEDIETAS, Etc.

April Fools, 30 min.	3	
Assessor, The, 10 min.	3	2
Baby Show at Pineville, 20 min.	19	
Bad Job, 30 min.	3	2
Betsy Baker, 45 min.	2	2
Billy's Chorus Girl, 25 min.	2	3
Billy's Mishap, 20 min.	2	3
Borrowed Luncheon, 20 min.	5	
Borrowing Trouble, 20 min.	3	5
Box and Cox, 35 min.	2	1
Case Against Casey, 40 min.	23	
Convention of Papas, 25 min.	7	
Country Justice, 15 min.	8	
Cow that Kicked Chicago, 20 m.	3	2

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY, Publishers, 154 W. Randolph St., Chicago.

ALL ON ACCOUNT OF POLLY

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

BY

HARRY L. NEWTON

AUTHOR OF

*The Corner Drug Store," "Everyyouth," "The Goodfellow," "The
Heiress of Hoctown," "Jayville Junction," "A Rehearsal at
Ten," "The Rest Cure," "The Spark of Life,"
"When the Circus Came to Town," Etc.*



CHICAGO

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

junk like an English butler." "How about you, Marie?" "I'm no foreigner; I'm Irish." "Ah, the rich! The only thing American they'll tolerate about the house is money." Harkins listens to advice. "Grab yourself a pick and shovel. Ye might get a crick in yer back, but it won't be from bowing and scraping to a bunch of Feather-Stones and Chadfields." "Made-in-America" language, habits and things are good enough for me. Why imitate foreigners?" Peter loses his monocle—and other things. "Here, Polly, is the first dollar I ever earned." "There's twenty-eight dollars here, Baldwin." Baldwin discovers he has had a raise in salary. Pudgy and Tommy from the tenements call. Peter asks for a job—and gets one. Polly and Baldwin are alone. "What's a little thing like a kiss between sweethearts?" The reformation of the Beverly family is complete. "Just a Song at Twilight."

STORY OF THE PLAY.

At the opening of the play the affairs of the Beverly household have reached a critical stage. Mr. Beverly, a man of large affairs in New York City, is surrounded by two extravagant, luxury loving daughters, a reckless, spendthrift son and a wife who, improvident herself, has spoiled her children from the time they were born.

The Beverly family has been spending money faster than the head of the house can earn it. Beverly is beset with creditors who even follow him out to his sumptuous Long Island home and threaten proceedings. He tries to make his family see the necessity of economy and warns them of the inevitable crash impending. Instead of heeding him, however, his warning is greeted with sneers and criticism and they decide that he is an old "grouch."

Into this clouded atmosphere of selfishness, deceit and false show comes Polly Perkins, Mr. Beverly's ward and a modest heiress. The Beverly mode of living on Long Island is in decided contrast to the simple New England village life to which she has been accustomed and for a moment she loses her bearings. But her heart and under-

standing are as big as all out doors and her eternal optimism and good will soon assert themselves. She brings with her the freedom and fragrance of the New England Berkshires, and instead of adapting herself to her new surroundings, she sets out to make them conform to her own standards of simplicity and happiness. Her very presence clarifies the atmosphere.

Not content with reforming the Beverly household, she goes into the poor districts of the village and even there her winning personality works miracles. Through her kindness of heart two ragged, unwashed children are introduced into high society, causing joy, consternation and condemnation among the various members of the "400."

Beverly returns from the city a ruined man and his family face the prospect of moving into a Harlem flat, which to their way of thinking is worse than death. At this juncture Polly comes to the rescue and with sublime faithfulness places her legacy, which represents every penny she has in the world, into the hands of her guardian to help him stem the tide.

In the meantime Beverly's son Baldwin, who makes love to every pretty face he meets, has fallen desperately in love with Polly. It proves the making of him. He actually goes to work for the first time in his life.

Through Polly's influence we see the better instincts of the Beverly family and their friends come to the surface. They realize that money is not everything, that social position and false friends do not constitute happiness and that Polly Perkins is a wonderful little person. Her guardian is saved from ruin and she finds her own happiness in the good she has wrought and the true love of Baldwin Beverly.

CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES.

BEVERLY—Typical New York business man of today, aged about 50. Wears expensive, showy clothes in Acts I and II, but a more modest suit in Act III. In Act I he reveals a cold and selfish nature; in Act II he loses much of this and in Act III he is kind and thoughtful.

MRS. B.—About 45. In Act I she is attired in a handsome morning negligee. In Act II, wears a beautiful afternoon gown, and in Act III, a quiet, simple costume. While she is not altogether a cold-hearted woman, she is always snappish and haughty, except when her latent mother-instinct is brought to the surface. In Act III her disposition has undergone a complete transformation and she is sweet, motherly and unselfish.

BALDWIN—Dashing young fellow of about 24. He is naturally warm-hearted and impulsive but has been spoiled. His one thought in life is the pleasure to be gotten out of it. He has been taught that "coin is king," and with money one can "get away with anything." He is a desperate flirt and has never had a sincere thought regarding the girls until Polly arrives. But with all his faults he is a truly likable chap. In Act I he wears a golf costume. In Act II, fashionable afternoon clothes, and in Act III, modest business suit.

HORTENSE—Pretty girl of 19 or 20. In Act I she is attired in a rather untidy negligee. In Act II she wears a simple house frock, changing to elaborate afternoon gown, and in Act III, a very simple, pretty girlish frock. She, like all the other members of the Beverly family, is selfish and believes that money comes above everything else.

GERALDINE—Pretty, winsome girl of 17 or 18. Keenly alive at all times and never has a serious thought. She is inclined to be satirical and finds delight in "picking" on the other members of the family. With all, she is warm-hearted and highly impulsive. In Act I her appearance is untidy. In Act II she appears first in a modest house frock and changes to handsome afternoon gown. In Act III wears a pretty, girlish frock.

PETER—About 25 years of age. While he is an American, he had early acquired the mimicry of English fops, with the monocle habit and drawling, exaggerated accent. Born of wealthy parents, he has never had to do much thinking for himself, and in consequence is slow and stupid in speech and action. Wears fashionable clothes throughout.

YOUNG—About 55 years old. Dresses in cheap clothing, denoting his close-fisted nature. Speaks with drawling Yankee dialect and has a bit of real humor in his soul.

MRS. F.—Perhaps 40 years of age and typically a society woman. Her manner and speech are highly colored and her every action exaggerated.

MRS. C.—A counterpart of Mrs. Feather-Stone, but a few years younger.

POLLY—About 19 years old. An affectionate, pretty girl, fairly brimming over with the joy of living and youthful animation. When first seen in Act I she is timid and shy, but gradually grows more sure of herself, although at no time does she approach boldness. In Act I she is inclined to be dowdy. In Act II she wears a pretty dress of white, and in Act III a pretty evening gown.

MARIE—Twenty-five years old. A rather pretty and typical Irish parlor-maid. Has a ready tongue and knows how to use it. Dresses throughout in regulation house-maid's uniform.

HARKINS—A regular stage butler, English accent and with every action bordering on the burlesque. English butler's regalia and wears mutton-chop whiskers.

MISS R.—A pretty girl of 20. She is fairly able to take care of herself. Chews gum and uses slang with equal ease. Dresses neatly, as becomes a girl of her occupation.

MISS B.—Also about 20. A counterpart of Miss Rembrandt, but is more inclined to "dress."

PUDGY—Fourteen years of age. Must be capable of speaking lines cleverly. Her clothing in Act II is ragged and patched; shoes run-down and stockings mis-mated. Her face and hands are streaked with dirt. In Act III she has undergone a transformation and appears as "quite a young lady."

TOMMY—Eleven or twelve years old. Must also be clever. In Act II he is the typical child waif and in Act III is all togged up "fit to kill."

LIST OF PROPERTIES

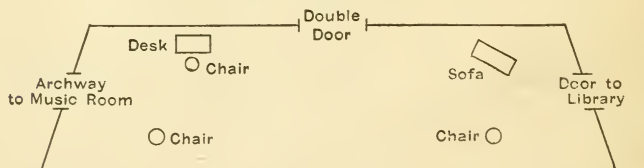
ACT I—Legal document for Beverly. Eight or ten sealed letters for Harkins. Purse and money for Mrs. Beverly. Promissory note for Young. Manicure tools for Miss Rembrandt. Glass bowl and water for manicuring. Magazine for Geraldine. Flowers for Peter. Suitcase, traveling bag, hat-box and parcels for Polly.

ACT II—Basin and pail of water; soap and towels. Cookies and other dainties for children's luncheon. Check-book, pen and legal document for Beverly; promissory note for Young. Roses for Baldwin.

ACT III—Door bell to ring off stage. Skein of worsted, piece of linen and needle for Hortense and bit of fancy work for Geraldine. Pay envelope and money (bills) for Baldwin.

NOTE.—“Love's Old Sweet Song” can be purchased at nearly every music store. We will send it postpaid upon receipt of price, 40 cents. If desired some other song can be used instead.

STAGE SETTING.



STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R., means right of stage; *C.*, center; *R. C.*, right center; *L.*, left; *R. D.*, right door; *L. D.*, left door, etc.; *1 E.*, first entrance; *U. E.*, upper entrance; *R. 3 E.*, right entrance, upstage, etc.; *D. F.*, door in flat or scene running across back of the stage; upstage, away from footlights; downstage, near footlights; *1 G.*, first groove, etc. The actor is supposed to be facing the audience.

ALL ON ACCOUNT OF POLLY

ACT I.

SCENE: Handsome living room of the Beverlys. Double doors at center. An archway at right opening into the music room in which can be seen a portion of a baby grand piano. A door at left opening into library. A small writing desk at back to right of center. The furniture and decorations are expensive and showy and selected with indifferent taste. Late morning, lights full up all through act. See Scene Plot for stage setting.

At rise enter HARKINS, C. D. He has the morning's mail (eight or ten letters) and deposits them on desk. He is about to exit again, C. D., when—

Enter BALDWIN, R. He is dressed in a golf suit with knickerbocker trousers, etc. and cap.

BALDWIN. I say, Harkins.

HARKINS (*faces BALDWIN inquiringly*). Yes, Mr. Baldwin.

BALDWIN. Have you seen the gov'nor this morning?

HARKINS. Yes, sir; a few moments ago, sir.

BALDWIN. Did you—ah—did you happen to notice—was he wearing a grouch?

HARKINS (*puzzled*). Wearing a—oh, I see, sir. Well, sir, if you ask me, I should say that he wasn't in the best of spirits, sir.

BALDWIN. Hum! Quite as I expected. Dad is in no mood for a bit of financial strategy. (HARKINS *lifts eyebrows inquiringly*.) In other words, Harkins, a "touch." That is all, Harkins. Thanks for the tip.

HARKINS. Thank you, sir. (*Bows and exits C. D.*)

BALDWIN (*pounces on letters on desk and runs them over rapidly*). Shucks! Nothing at all encouraging in that bunch. Just cold-blooded duns from vulgar trades-people.

I'd know them blindfolded. (*Tosses letters carelessly back on desk.*)

Enter MRS. BEVERLY *from R. She is in handsome negligee. Carries a purse.*

MRS. BEVERLY. Morning, Baldwin. (*Offers her cheek for kiss.*)

BALDWIN. Ah, muvver. (*Takes off cap, tosses it into convenient chair, kisses her, then takes both her hands, steps back a pace or two and looks admiringly at her.*) Say, muvver, do you know that you actually grow younger every day?

MRS. B. (*taps him tenderly on cheek*). You behave! I know what it means when you try to knock a few years off my tree of life with complimentary sticks.

BALDWIN (*innocently*). Eh, what?

MRS. B. I know. Your bank account has a "flat tire."

BALDWIN (*laughs*). Righto! (*Cheerfully.*) What's the chance of "inflating" said "flat tire?"

MRS. B. Not the slightest—from me. (*Sighs.*) You must ask your father.

BALDWIN. Don't make me laugh so early in the morning. Dad is off me for life. (*Earnestly.*) Look here, mother. I must have money—quite a sum. My tailor is acting ugly, my club has me posted up for dues, and—oh, there's a thousand things I've simply just got to take care of—quick, too.

MRS. B. (*sadly*). I'm sorry, my boy; but it is simply out of the question—

BALDWIN (*interrupting, eagerly*). But, dad? Can't you talk to him?

MRS. B. (*thoughtfully*). There must be some way—(*suddenly*) yes, Baldwin, I *shall* talk to him. It is not right that he should refuse what is your just due. Run along now and I will see what can be done.

BALDWIN (*kisses her lightly on cheek*). That's the idea, muvver. You know how. (*Aside.*) I'll be hanged if I do. See you later. (*Exits C. D.*)

MARIE enters R. She wears the conventional parlor-maid uniform of black skirt, waist, white apron, cuffs and lace cap. She carries a vase of cut flowers and deposits them on table near C.

MRS. B. Has Mr. Beverly left for business, Marie?

MARIE (*with slight Irish brogue*). No, ma'am; he's still in the lie-berry.

MRS. B. Ask him if he can spare me a few moments before he leaves. Say that it is important. I will wait here. (MARIE bows respectfully and exits R.) Yes, something must be done! (*Crosses to desk, gathers up the letters.*) Bills, bills, bills! (*Sighs heavily.*) First day of the month, and—no funds. (*Tosses letters carelessly back on desk, disgustedly.*) Well, it's nothing to me. I am not going to develop white hair and wrinkles; it's up to Ralph He simply must do something. (*Throws purse on desk.*)

Enter BEVERLY, L. He carries hat, stick and gloves.

BEVERLY. You wish to speak to me, dear? (*She turns. He takes his watch from pocket and frowns as he notes time.*)

MRS. B. Yes, Ralph. I've hardly had a glimpse of you for several days, and—and I—I—(*hesitates, seemingly at a loss to go on*).

BEVERLY (*coldly*). Well?

MRS. B. (*impulsively*). It's money!

BEVERLY (*sighs wearily*). I am doing all that is possible, my dear. (*Twists gloves nervously between fingers.*) No business—things look very uncertain. (*Again notes time.*)

MRS. B. Credit?

BEVERLY (*nervously*). I've gone my limit.

MRS. B. (*impatently*). Rubbish! Ralph Beverly's name should serve to raise plenty of cash, and—

BEVERLY (*interrupting*). You—you don't understand. No, no. I don't mean to censure you. It's not a woman's place to—to—

MRS. B. (*interrupting*). Perhaps not. But a woman is the first to suffer the agony of a depleted bank account. (*Gathers up envelopes from desk. Vehemently.*) Look!

These are what I have to understand. Bills, bills, bills! (*Crushes them in her hand and flings them back on desk.*) Shop-keepers! They torture me by day and haunt my dreams by night! Where, where will it all end? (*Sinks wearily into a chair.*)

BEVERLY (*paces nervously about, then stops and draws himself coldly erect*). Jane, did it ever occur to you that our present financial condition might have been prevented by a little economy on your part? (*She straightens quickly, but he checks her intended speech by a gesture.*) Wait! Those bills you refer to—all luxuries! Yes, luxuries, every one of them, and mighty expensive ones, too.

MRS. B. (*spiritedly*). Luxuries! Party gowns, motors, flowers, manicuring, hair dressing, wines. You call those things luxuries? Why, they are absolute necessities!

BEVERLY (*with a despairing gesture*). Time was when we managed to do without them. (*Vehemently.*) And we must do without them again.

MRS. B. (*excitedly, to feet*). What! Are you going crazy?

BEVERLY (*wearily*). Almost. But it isn't a question of my sanity. It's a vital question of my income covering the cost of our living. No other man of my acquaintance has the improvident, reckless, extravagant family that surrounds me.

BALDWIN *appears at C. D. He starts to enter, then steps aside to first reconnoiter.*

MRS. B. (*shocked at his tirade*). Ralph Beverly! You forget yourself. I rise in defense of my children. You have been most shamefully neglectful of them—especially Baldwin. The poor boy barely has enough allowance to keep him decently. (BALDWIN *nods his approval.*) He must have more money. (BALDWIN *again nods.*)

BEVERLY (*angrily*). Baldwin has had his last dollar from me. He must go to work. (BALDWIN *grimaces and sneaks in comedy tip-toe manner across C. D. opening and off R.*) Also, Hortense must get over her extravagant ideas of life.

And Geraldine(*despairing gesture*)—by gad, she is incorrigible!

MRS. B. (*aghast*). Ralph Beverly! You have indeed taken sudden leave of your senses. Hortense has a brilliant future in her music. She must not neglect it; I shall see to that! (*Stamps her foot emphatically.*)

HORTENSE *meanwhile has entered the music room and now bursts forth into a popular ragtime song, accompanying herself on the piano in a highly burlesque manner. BEVERLY displays his disgust by a grimace and throws up both hands.*

MRS. B. Hortense! (*calling to HORTENSE.*) Hortense! Stop, child. (*Music stops.*) Your father and I can't hear each other. Some other time, dear.

HORTENSE (*in music room, fretfully*). Oh, mother, you're always telling me to stop when I get started. (*Rises from piano stool, disdainfully shrugs shoulders and disappears off R.*)

BEVERLY. I do not mean to be brutal, my dear, but there's an end to everything—even money.

MRS. B. Nevertheless, I intend to be supplied with money according to my station.

BEVERLY (*gently*). You are right, Jane. I have given you this station. (*Sighs.*) I have no right to change it.

MRS. B. As for my allowance, it has at all times been insufficient for our needs—really insufficient. And I don't see how I can accept any reduction.

BEVERLY (*drawing close to her and speaking earnestly and pleadingly*). Let us go back to the old life, dear. We'll begin all over again, away from this stifling luxury, this low plotting and maneuvering to acquire things which we do not own, but which own us, chain us, eat us up.

MRS. B. (*drawing away from him in shocked surprise*). What! Give up this? (*Indicating room with a sweep of her hand.*) Go back to—to (*checks further speech with a shudder of disgust*). Never!

BEVERLY (*resignedly*). You are right. *You* would never be content with the old life—after this.

MRS. B. And neither would you.

BEVERLY (*sighs*). Oh, if I only could!

MRS. B. (*coldly*). You forget I am your wife.

BEVERLY (*quickly*). No, I don't. You won't let me. (*Consults watch, puts on hat and starts for C. D.*)

MRS. B. (*checking him*). Ralph, you *must* hear me out. You speak of your "improvident," "reckless" and "extravagant" family, and now you are planning to increase your burden by the adoption of your ward—Polly Perkins—an ignorant, moneyless girl from a little New England village. Ralph, you are an enigma.

BEVERLY (*glances cautiously about, confidentially*). You have forced my hand in this matter. I intended to—well, I didn't propose you should know just what my idea was in having Polly come here, but—see here. (*Draws a legal document from inside pocket of coat.*) This makes me the sole trustee of her estate.

MRS. B. (*surprised*). Estate?

BEVERLY. Yes—a matter of \$25,000, principally in cash. Now do you understand? (*Restores paper to pocket.*)

MRS. B. (*agitatedly*). And you? You would—

BEVERLY (*interrupting*). I am desperate. Her money will tide me over—give me a chance to recuperate financially—it means my very existence. For you and the children it means more. *This!* (*indicates with the sweep of a hand the surrounding luxury.*) It is either her money, or—(*shrugs significantly*).

MRS. B. You would not use this girl's money—you would not become a thief?

BEVERLY (*laughs easily*). Thief! Nonsense. I would merely invest her money for her.

MRS. B. And if you should lose?

BEVERLY (*shrugs*). One never can tell.

MRS. B. (*agitatedly*). Oh, Ralph, Ralph, you *must* not!

BEVERLY (*carelessly*). Oh, very well. Perhaps you may enjoy a week or two more of this gilded existence, but I doubt it. As it looks to me now, it's merely a matter of hours, and then—

MRS. B. And then?

BEVERLY. And then a Harlem six-room apartment and a peevish janitor. (*She raises both hands in horror at the thought and grimaces in disgust.*) You see, my dear.

MRS. B. (*undecided*). I—I don't know what to say.

HARKINS *appears in C. D.*

BEVERLY (*to HARKINS*). What is it, Harkins?

HARKINS (*stiffly*). A person to see you, sir; name is Young.

MRS. B. (*startled, aside*). The loan shark!

BEVERLY (*glances significantly at her, hesitates, then to HARKINS*). Show Mr. Young in, Harkins. (*HARKINS bows respectfully and exits R. of C. D.*)

MRS. B. Why does that person come here?

BEVERLY (*laughs coldly*). He comes here because he hasn't been able to obtain an audience with me at my New York office.

MRS. B. The contemptible scoundrel!

BEVERLY (*defensively*). No, dear; he's not—at least, he wasn't when he handed me several thousand dollars. (*Chuckles.*)

HARKINS *appears in C. D. from R.*

HARKINS (*stiffly announcing*). Mr. Silas Young.

YOUNG *appears in C. D. from R. He stares curiously at the haughty HARKINS and then at BEVERLY and MRS. B. HARKINS'S nose is further uplifted as he stalks majestically off R. MRS. B., with a look of disgust, retires to desk, sits, back to YOUNG.*

BEVERLY (*to YOUNG, who is toying awkwardly with hat held between his fingers*). Come, what's on your mind? I can only spare you a moment or two. I am already late for business. (*Nervously glances at his watch.*)

YOUNG (*advances awkwardly into room a couple of paces*). I called to see you regarding that—that (*glances inquiringly at MRS. B.'s uninviting back*).

BEVERLY (*impatiently*). Don't mind Mrs. Beverly. I have nothing to conceal from her.

YOUNG (*nervously shifts from one foot to the other, while he glances curiously about the apartment*). Hum! Purty nice sort of a place ye got here, Mr. Beverly. (MRS. B. *turns and throws a scornful look at him.*)

BEVERLY (*attempting to appear at ease*). We like it, Mr. Young. But you didn't come here this morning merely to admire my home, did you?

YOUNG (*drawling*). No-o, not exactly. I took the liberty of callin' at yer home, fer the reason that I couldn't somehow connect with you in yer New York office. (*Draws paper from an inside pocket.*) I got a leetle somethin' comin' to me on this, and—

BEVERLY (*interrupting, rapidly*). Yes, yes; I know. I haven't forgotten that little obligation; and you shall have my check as soon as I reach my office this morning. Sorry, but you will have to excuse me—very busy, you know. If you're going down to the village, my car is waiting at the door. (*To MRS. B.*) Good-bye, dear. (*Starts for C. D.*)

YOUNG (*checks BEVERLY's attempted departure by raising a commanding hand*). Jest a minute, Mr. Beverly. Jest ye hold yer hosses. I got a leetle talk I ain't never talked yet, and ye gotta listen while I talk it. I also got a note here for four thousand two hundred dollars, and it's a long time past due. Ye've been doin' some fancy stallin' and I'm all tired out tryin' to get close enough to ye to collect, so—

BEVERLY (*interrupting, impatiently*). I told you you would have my check today.

YOUNG (*patiently*). If my mem'ry serves me right, ye told me that several times before. But ye ain't never goin' to get a chance to tell me agin.

BEVERLY (*angrily*). Don't you dare threaten me!

YOUNG (*mildly*). I ain't a-threatenin' ye. I'm jest tellin' ye. (*Places note carefully back in his pocket and turns to C. D.*) I'm sorry to have to talk severe-like, especially in the presence of a lady. (*Glances at MRS. B.*) But desperate cases require desperate remedies. I'll give ye jest one week to *remember* to mail me yer check, in full. As fer ye ridin' me to the village in yer automobile, nothin'

doin'. It ain't at all likely it's paid fer, so I'd feel more comfortable walkin'. And if ye paid the men ye owe, they'd be ridin' and ye'd be walkin'. That's erbout all, Mr. Beverly. Good day. Sorry to have detained ye from business. (*Starts to exit C. D.*)

BEVERLY. Just a moment, Mr. Young. I'll have Harkins show you out.

YOUNG. 'Tain't necessary. I never believe in havin' a hired man workin' fer nothin', so I won't put yer Harkins to any extra labor on my account. (*Bowing mockingly he exits C. D.*)

MRS. B. (*springs angrily to her feet, facing the crest-fallen BEVERLY*). Ralph Beverly! That man insulted you!

BEVERLY (*dryly*). Yes, dear, and I swallowed it. (*Quickly.*) The man is right. He has money due him and is entitled to consideration. Now you must realize what I am up against. He is but one of the many creditors who are daily hounding me. Am I right or wrong in acquiring the money of this "ignorant girl from a New England village?"

MRS. B. (*hesitates, during which she appears to be striving against the inevitable*). You are right. For the sake of our children—but be careful.

BEVERLY (*pats her on shoulder in reassuring manner and lightly kisses her on cheek*). Goodbye, dear. (*Briskly to C. D., turns.*) Please try and curtail somewhere along the expense line, won't you? (*Exits C. D., off R.*)

As BEVERLY is well off, BALDWIN appears in C. D., from L., looking after his father. Simultaneously HORTENSE appears at R. and GERALDINE from L. Both girls are in disheveled negligee.

MRS. B. (*surprised and gazing from one to the other*). Well, for gracious sake! (*HORTENSE and GERALDINE tip-toe to C. D., join BALDWIN and all three peer off R. for an instant, then come down to C. and turn inquiringly to MRS. B.*)

BALDWIN, HORTENSE and GERALDINE (*in chorus*). Well?

(*They stare at Mrs. B. anxiously, but she makes a despairing gesture and shrugs her shoulders.*)

BALDWIN (*to Mrs. B.*). That means that his royal highness did not come across. What?

HORTENSE. And that I don't get my new gown. Fudge!

GERALDINE. And I don't get the new things for my bedroom? (*The three turn to each other in comic dismay.*)

MRS. B. (*sadly*). My poor darlings!

HORTENSE. And it was such a lovely shade, too.

MRS. B. (*suddenly*). Wait, children. (*Glances cautiously all about.*) I almost forgot. I have news for you. (*The three ejaculate a surprised "Ah!"*)

BALDWIN. Good or bad?

MRS. B. (*doubtfully*). Yes, and no.

GERALDINE. Well, give us the good—you're welcome to the bad.

MRS. B. Your father has been named trustee for a distant connection of his—Polly Perkins. She—she is coming here to—to make her home with us.

HORTENSE (*shocked*). Oh, mother!

GERALDINE. How dreadful!

BALDWIN (*thoughtfully*). Hum! I can't figure whether that's good or bad news. (*Brightly.*) Is she pretty?

MRS. B. I don't know. Nobody ever saw her.

HORTENSE (*scornfully*). Polly Perkins!

GERALDINE. How can a girl be pretty with a name like that?

BALDWIN (*loftily*). Oh, you never can tell by the label what's in a package.

MRS. B. (*shocked*). Baldwin! However, it isn't a question of the girl's beauty. She is an heiress. (*Again the three ejaculate an "Ah!"*)

BALDWIN (*briskly and jauntily rearranging his tie, etc.*). Then she is very, very pretty.

GERALDINE. And when comes this Polly person, mother?

MRS. B. (*startled*). I—I don't know. Your father didn't say. (*Suddenly.*) Wait! (*Swiftly to desk, picks up letters, skims them over rapidly, stops at one, looks at it, then tears envelope open.*) This is from her. (*Reads it at a*

glance and throws it back on desk. Aghast.) She will be here today! (*BALDWIN again carefully adjusts tie.*)

GERALDINE (*yawning*). Well, I'm quite sure that she's not going to spoil my whole day. It is me for the sun-parlor and the fifth chapter of Helen Glynn's latest love spasm. (*Exits L.*)

HORTENSE. As for me, back to my interrupted music. (*Starts R.*)

MRS. B. (*to HORTENSE*). No, no, my darling. Postpone your music—*please!* I must have quiet.

HORTENSE (*disdainfully tossing her head*). Oh, I'm not seething with musical fever. I don't believe I shall ever become a high-brow in musical accomplishment. To me it's drudgery. I do it only to please you.

MRS. B. Yes, I know—but some other time, dear. Now go. (*HORTENSE shrugs, exits R.*) Oh, I don't know what to do, what to think.

BALDWIN. Precisely my position. How about the "inflation" of my "flat tire?" (*Idly picks up MRS. B.'s purse from desk.*) Something must be done, you know. (*Toys with purse absently.*)

MRS. B. Yes, yes, dear. But you must be patient for a few days.

BALDWIN. Oh, *I* can be patient all right. But my creditors. How about them?

MRS. B. Everything will come out all right, Baldwin. Your father has promised.

BALDWIN (*dryly*). Yes, that's the best thing he does.

MRS. B. (*sullenly*). I can't give you what I don't possess.

BALDWIN (*suddenly realizing the possibilities contained in her purse he is holding, weighing it appraisingly*). Hello! This your purse?

MRS. B. Yes, but—

BALDWIN (*chidingly*). Why, muvver—you're holding out on me. (*Laughs.*) How dare you? (*Starts to open purse.*)

MRS. B. (*checks him in the act*). No, no, dear; you mustn't. You can't have any of that money. I've already promised that—tomorrow, perhaps, I may be able to—give

you some—but—(*takes purse from him.*) There. Now you be a good boy and don't worry me any more today about horrid money matters. Promise?

BALDWIN. Huh! I'll *have* to be a good boy. How can I be anything else but good without money? (*Earnestly.*) Now, see here. I wouldn't rave about this money thing unless I were absolutely up against it. Besides—well, I don't call it playing fair with your only son not to supply him with a few dollars now and then. Things have come to a pretty pass in this house. Say, the gov'nor even mentioned something about me going to work. I—

MRS. B. (*interrupting, sternly*). Baldwin, you forget yourself! (*Lays purse on desk.*) You simply must wait. You don't seem to realize, much less care, what the present conditions are. Haven't I always been liberal with you?

BALDWIN (*sullenly*). Yes, but—(*leans against desk*).

MRS. B. Then don't be rude. (*Pats his cheek tenderly.*) You shall have money—don't worry. It's only for a day or two that I ask you to be patient. Now run along to the links. I have a thousand things to do. (*Kisses him lightly and exits R.*)

BALDWIN (*as he leans dejectedly against desk, his eyes slowly fall and rest on his mother's purse. His hand strays to it and he picks it up. His glance cautiously surveys the room. He is tempted to open it, struggles against the desire and finally overcomes it, flinging purse back on desk.*) Shucks! I may be broke, but I'm not going to turn thief. (*Draws himself erect, goes to chair on which he has thrown his cap, picks it up, twists it thoughtfully between his fingers.*) Work! That's rubbing it in. Great Scott! Never—I'll never work—not while I have my health and strength. (*Slams cap viciously on head and starts for C. D.*)

Enter HARKINS, C. D., followed by Miss REMBRANDT. She carries small bag containing manicure tools. BALDWIN pauses, smiles and removes his cap.

HARKINS (*to Miss REMBRANDT*). Miss Hortense will see you here this morning, miss. (*Crosses and exits R.*)

BALDWIN (*to MISS REMBRANDT, with easy familiarity*). Good morning, little one.

MISS R. (*going to table and depositing bag on it*). Miss Rembrandt, Mr. Beverly, if you please. (*Opens handbag, takes out stick of gum, places it carefully in mouth and chews it with keen relish.*)

BALDWIN (*laughs good-naturedly*). All right. But what's the idea of the high and mighty stuff?

MISS R. (*removes hat and gloves*). Now, you'd better run along, little boy. This is my busy day. (*She is not exactly cold and haughty, but rather takes delight in a bit of repartee.*)

BALDWIN. Say, a stick of gum hasn't a chance on earth with you, has it? As for my "running along," I can do that any old time; but I can't always grab a chance to talk to a very pretty girl. (*Sits on arm of chair and smirks at her.*)

MISS R. (*opens bag, takes out manicure tools and places them on table*). Say, I've heard that before. It's not original.

BALDWIN. I suppose every chap you meet tells you the same thing.

MISS R. (*dryly*). Oh, no—only the sap-heads.

BALDWIN (*grimaces*). Ooo! Now I should be very angry. But I'm not. Instead, I believe I shall have some work done. (*Scans his finger nails.*)

MISS R. I'm a manicurist—not a brain specialist.

BALDWIN (*laughs good-naturedly*). Say, you know, you're a bright young woman. Too bright by far for the job you're holding down.

MISS R. (*holds up scissors*). Yes, I'm real "cutting," ain't I?

BALDWIN (*slips off arm of chair, goes to table close to her*). It's too bad a very pretty girl like you should be compelled to work for a living. It must be awfully hard to be poor.

MISS R. You're wrong. It's the easiest thing in the world.

BALDWIN. Aw, shucks! There's only one way I can play

even with you, and that is by planting a kiss on those saucy lips of yours. (*Attempts to kiss her, she evades him.*)

MISS R. (*with table between them, good-naturedly*). Aw! You behave! (*He starts for her, but she evades him by edging around the table. Sternly.*) Mr. Beverly, listen. I didn't mind a little good-natured chaffing from you, but now you're going too far. You seem to think that because you're rich and I'm poor, that you can—oh, what's the use. You don't understand. You've got too much money to understand anything but just one thing—*money!* I just want to ask you one thing, Mr. Beverly. Suppose some man would try to kiss one of your sisters against her will, what would you do?

BALDWIN (*fiercely, clinching fists*). I'd send him home with his head in a sling.

MISS R. (*triumphantly*). And there you are!

BALDWIN. Oh, but it's quite different in this case.

MISS R. Why is it?

BALDWIN (*hesitates, apparently trying to think of an answer, then limply*). Why—you—you haven't any brother.

MISS R. (*gaspingly*). Can-you-beat-it?

BALDWIN *attempts to detain her but she evades him by slipping around the table. As they dodge back and forth* HORTENSE *enters from R. and surveys their antics with surprise.*

HORTENSE (*after a moment's survey*). I say, Baldwin.

BALDWIN (*pausing suddenly—abashed, turns to HORTENSE*). Eh? (MISS R., *with an amused smile, glances from one to other.*)

HORTENSE. What kind of a game do you call that?

BALDWIN (*confusedly*). Why—why, she has something I—I want.

HORTENSE (*sternly, to MISS R.*). Miss Rembrandt, have you anything belonging to my brother? (BALDWIN *giggles.*)

MISS R. (*astounded*). Me? Well, I should say not. (*Confusedly.*) He—he was trying to kiss me.

HORTENSE (*indifferently*). Oh, is that all? Why so

fussy about a little thing like that. (BALDWIN and Miss R. *make comedy grimaces.*) Now, Miss Rembrandt, please don't keep me waiting. (*Sits at table. To BALDWIN.*) And, Baldwin, don't let us detain you. Miss Rembrandt will be engaged with me for a half hour. After that—(*carelessly waves a hand.*) After that, her time is her own again.

BALDWIN (*airily*). Thank you, sis. You're a good fellow. (*Yawns.*) But I believe I'll be getting along. Ta-ta. (*To C. D., turns as a sudden thought strikes him.*) Oh, I say, sis. Have you any money littering up your bag that you want to get rid of to make room for other more necessary articles?

HORTENSE (*with finger tips in water, surprised*). What?

BALDWIN. You know—any old money—not particular how soiled, lop-sided or dilapidated it is—I'll take it out for an airing. (*Miss R. stares in dumbfounded amazement at him.*)

HORTENSE (*gasping in comic dismay*). You—you ask me for money? Heavens! (*Throws up both hands in holy horror at the thought, and showering Miss R. with water, who grabs towel and hastily wipes her face.*) Baldy, what an idea. Why don't you ask mother?

BALDWIN (*dryly*). Hum! You know, I never thought of that. (*Briskly.*) Well, there's no use of me choking up this particular atmosphere. So long. (*To Miss R., in playful, tragic manner.*) As for you, you little rascal, I'll get you yet. (*Exits C. D.*)

HORTENSE. You mustn't mind him.

MISS R. (*significantly*). Oh, I don't. (*Curiously.*) But I don't understand—him in need of money? (*Begins work on HORTENSE'S fingers.*)

HORTENSE. Say girlie, what you don't know will never harm you.

MISS R. (*impressively*). Say, ain't that the terrible truth.

HARKINS *appears in C. D., followed by Miss BUSHNELL.*

HARKINS (*to Miss B.*). Miss Geraldine will see you here this morning, miss. (*Crosses to R. and exits. Miss B.*

comes down to table, nods haughtily to Miss R., who acknowledges it by a pert toss of her head and then resumes her work.)

MISS B. (to HORTENSE, cheerfully and drawing off her gloves). Good morning, Miss Beverly.

HORTENSE (languidly and raising her eyes). Oh, hello. (Opens a magazine with one hand and becomes immersed in reading.)

MISS B. (removes hat, aside). I seem to be as welcome as a snow storm at a Fourth of July celebration. (Tosses her hat on a convenient chair.)

Enter GERADINE from R. She carries a brush and comb.

GERALDINE (to Miss B.). The maid is cleaning upstairs, so I thought we could get on better down here. You don't mind, do you? (Yawns and sinks lazily into a chair.)

MISS B. (with a meaning glance at HORTENSE and MISS R.). Oh, no. I like to work in a congenial atmosphere. (Places a small table in front of GERALDINE, gets chair for herself and sits. Proceeds to take GERALDINE'S hair down and brush it. Both girls apply themselves busily to their beauty labors for several moments.)

GERALDINE (after the pause, languidly). I wonder what she's like?

HORTENSE (after a pause, not raising eyes from magazine). Speaking to me?

GERALDINE. Yes. Not that I think you care. It merely makes conversation.

HORTENSE (slight pause again). I don't know to whom you are referring. (Stifling a yawn.) Besides, why conversation?

GERALDINE (with exaggerated politeness). Oh, I beg your pardon.

HORTENSE (mimicing her). Oh, pray don't mention it.

GERALDINE (plaintively). Say, sis, have a heart. I couldn't get any satisfaction from mother, and now you refuse to satisfy my seething curiosity.

HORTENSE (impatiently, slamming magazine on table). Will you please tell me just what you are talking about?

GERALDINE (*petulantly*). Aw, be good. Besides, you might surmise. I mean this Polly person.

HORTENSE. My dear sister, you should be more discreet than to discuss our family affairs before these—paid attendants. (*The girls make wry faces at this shot and avenge themselves by a violent slap of the hair brush and a vigorous dig of the nail file, forcing a cry of pain from HORTENSE and GERALDINE.*)

GERALDINE. Aren't we having a lovely time?

HARKINS *appears at C. D.*

HARKINS (*to HORTENSE*). Mr. Hartleigh, Miss Hortense. (*HORTENSE, startled, springs to her feet.*)

GERALDINE (*cuttingly*). There's always somebody to jolt the joy out of life.

HORTENSE (*wildly*). Why, I—I can't see him now. Tell him to wait on the porch.

GERALDINE. Or in the garage.

HARKINS. Yes, miss. (*Starts to exit.*)

Enter PETER. He carries hat, walking stick and large bouquet of flowers. HARKINS takes his hat and stick and exits.

PETER (*advancing with comic, mincing steps, smiling in silly fashion*). Ah, I beg your pardon; but I hope I'm not intruding—really I do.

GERALDINE (*mischievously*). Why, Peter, what lovely flowers. Thank you so much. (*Reaches out a hand for them.*)

PETER (*bewildered, hands her flowers*). You-re—you're quite welcome, I'm sure. (*GERALDINE takes flowers and throws a triumphant glance at HORTENSE.*)

HORTENSE (*to PETER, sternly*). Peter Hartleigh!

PETER (*realizing his mistake, grabs bouquet from GERALDINE*). Yes, of course they are not for you. (*Hands flowers to HORTENSE. GERALDINE giggles. Miss R. and Miss B. find difficulty in concealing their delight.*)

HORTENSE (*tosses flowers carelessly on table*). All right, Mr. Hartleigh. Now that you've delivered them to

the proper person, you may run along on your other errands.

PETER. Oh, I say, now, that's rawther unkind, you know I paid \$4 for those flowers. Besides, I thought it would be a jolly fine morning for a walk.

GERALDINE. Bless your soul, Peter, how original you are. What's the matter with *ride*? (PETER *fits monocle to an eye and stares in speechless astonishment at GERALDINE.*)

HORTENSE (*to GERALDINE*). Geraldine, mind your own affairs. (*To PETER.*) Can't you see that we are in no condition for receiving this morning?

PETER (*transferring his gaze from GERALDINE to her*). By Jove, I cawnt see why not. You're simply dazzling

GERALDINE (*aside*). Oh, shucks! (*Giggles.*)

HORTENSE (*to PETER, mollified by his compliment*). Now, Peter, be a good boy. Run along to the porch or some place and I'll join you soon as ever I can.

PETER (*grudgingly*). All right, sweetheart. But I'd much rawther stop here, don't you know. I just cawnt bear to be out of your sight. (*Simpers at her. GERALDINE and the other two girls almost choke with suppressed merriment.*)

HORTENSE (*with an angry glance at the girls*). It's a good thing one can't be arrested for thinking.

GERALDINE (*maliciously*). Isn't it? (*Glancing at PETER.*) There are some who'd be immune from arrest forever.

HARKINS *appears at C. D.*

HARKINS (*very stiffly*). A person to see Mr. or Mrs. Beverly.

HORTENSE. Person?

HARKINS. Beg pardon, Miss Hortense. Young woman. Said she was expected.

GERALDINE. The Polly person. (*To feet, excitedly.*)

HORTENSE. Good gracious! (*Rising.*) I suppose she must come in, Harkins. (HARKINS *bows and is about to exit but stops at a gesture from her.*) Wait. You'd better notify my mother of the—this person's arrival.

HARKINS. Yes, miss; very good. (*Bows, crosses to R. and exits.*)

HORTENSE (*glancing helplessly from one to the other*). Gracious! I'm up a tree. Mother must receive her. I wouldn't know what to say.

PETER (*admiringly, referring to HORTENSE*). My word, doesn't she just know how to handle affairs, though?

GERALDINE (*dryly*). In the meantime, sis, wouldn't you consider it quite proper to ask the—this person in?

HORTENSE (*shocked*). I? I show her in—like a common servant. Never!

PETER. Nevah!

HARKINS *enters from R., crosses to C. D., turns to address HORTENSE.*

HARKINS. Your mother will be down directly, miss.

HARKINS *turns in stately dignity to exit, when enters POLLY. She carries a hatbox and suitcase in one hand, a bundle and traveling bag in the other and a large package under each arm. She stares in timid curiosity at the assemblage and then all about the room. Finally her glance travels slowly to the impassive HARKINS and she is awe-stricken. The others meanwhile have been quite equally overcome with curiosity and have formed a line on either side of her, staring vacantly at her. POLLY finally allows the parcels, suitcase and traveling bag to slip to the floor and extends her hand to HARKINS.*

POLLY (*attempting to shake hands with HARKINS*). How do you do, sir. (HARKINS *draws back in outraged dignity*.) Aren't you my guardian, Mr. Beverly? (HARKINS *nearly explodes with suppressed emotion*. HORTENSE *drops limply into a convenient chair*, MISS R. and MISS B. *turn their backs to conceal their merriment*, PETER *raises monocle to eye and stares in horrified astonishment at POLLY*, and GERALDINE, *unable longer to smother her feelings, laughs explosively*. POLLY, *glancing helplessly from one person to the other and almost on the verge of*

tears). Per—perhaps I'm in the wrong house. I—I was told that this was where Mr. Beverly lived.

PETER. My word! (to HORTENSE). Is she—she a new maid?

Enter MRS. B. from R., takes in the situation at a glance, then crosses quickly to POLLY.

MRS. B. (to POLLY, coldly). I presume this is Miss Perkins?

POLLY (hopefully). Yes, ma'am. And you—you are Mrs. Beverly?

MRS. B. Yes.

POLLY. Oh! (Fairly throws herself into MRS. B.'s arms and, sobbing, buries her head in her bosom.)

MRS. B. (the mother instinct breaking through her cold reserve, presses POLLY to her and pats her tenderly on the shoulder). There, there, child; don't cry. (Kisses POLLY warmly; then, as if ashamed of giving way, thrusts POLLY from her and turns commandingly to give rapid-fire orders to the others.) I don't know what this house would come to if anything should happen to me. Morning, Peter. Harkins, pick up that—those parcels and take them up to the small back room at the end of the north hallway. (HARKINS hastily gathers up POLLY's luggage and exits R.) As for you—(to MISS B. and MISS R.), if you have finished you may be excused. (They, glad to escape, hastily prepare for their departure.) And you, dear (to POLLY), you sit down somewhere until I've straightened out this domestic confusion. (POLLY sits forlornly on edge of chair, gazing in awe around the apartment. HORTENSE is polishing her finger nails with handkerchief and GERALDINE is admiring her newly dressed hair and taking in the scene out of the corner of her eye.)

PETER (aside, referring to MRS. B.). My word, what a wonderful woman!

MRS. B. (to HORTENSE and GERALDINE). Girls, I'm surprised and ashamed of you. Whatever possessed you to descend to the drawing-room in such attires? No excuses. I won't listen to them. (MISS R. and MISS B. are now

ready to depart.) And to have your hair dressing and manicuring—(*suddenly discovers Miss R. and Miss B. at C. D., waiting expectantly.*) Well, why don't you go? Are you waiting to be shown out?

MISS R. No, ma'am; waiting for money.

MISS B. (*easily*). Yes, ma'am.

MRS. B. (*aghast*). What impudence! Money! How dare you!

MISS R. I know it's a lot of nerve to ask for what we've honestly earned, but—

MISS B. But we can certainly use it without any inconvenience.

MRS. B. (*with a contemptuous glance at each of them in turn, crosses to desk, takes bill from purse and hands it to Miss R. with a flourish*). There. That is more than ample. Now you may go.

MISS R. (*takes bill, opens her bag, extracts change and hands it to MRS. B. with an exaggerated imitation flourish*). There. That is the exact change. Now we shall be amply delighted to go. (*They bow with exaggerated courtesy and exeunt C. D.*)

PETER (*awkwardly*). I'm—I'm afraid I'm rawther blocking domestic progress, so I'm off. (*Goes to GERALDINE and HORTENSE, each in turn, and shakes them limply by the hand, and then to MRS. B. As he passes POLLY he stops, adjusts his monocle and favors her with a curious scrutiny.*) My word! (*Passes to C. D., mincing steps, and exits.*)

MRS. B. (*with a sigh of relief*). I'm glad he's gone. He gets on my nerves. (*To GERALDINE and HORTENSE.*) Now you girls run up stairs and get into some presentable clothes. (*They start to protest.*) Not a word. Go! (*The girls rise and walk haughtily to R. and exeunt.*)

POLLY (*timidly*). I'm—I'm afraid I should have let you know exactly the time I would arrive, but I didn't suppose it would make very much difference.

MRS. B. (*quickly*). Not at all, my dear. No need to apologize. Sorry, however, that your guardian is not here.

(*Reflective pause.*) I have it. You just sit here, dear, and I'll telephone him. I won't be a minute. (*Quickly exits R.*)

POLLY (*glances sadly all about the room—pathetically*). My new home. (*Sighs heavily.*) It's a grand place, but it'll never be a real home to me. (*Brightly.*) Oh, what am I saying! (*Briskly to feet.*) This isn't the spirit to battle new conditions with. (*Changes again to doubtful manner, glancing all about the room.*) But those people! (*Laughs.*) My, aren't they just too funny. (*Imitates PETER with monocle.*) My word!

Enter MARIE, L., stops abruptly in surprise as she discovers POLLY.

MARIE. I beg your pardon miss.

POLLY (*startled*). Oh! (*Gives MARIE an appraising look, then smiles sweetly.*) How do you do?

MARIE (*smiling in turn*). You're Miss Perkins, miss? (*POLLY nods.*) And did they leave you all alone? (*POLLY again nods and smiles.*) Well, well, well. (*Comes to POLLY, warmly.*) You mustn't mind them, miss. (*Glances cautiously about.*) They're a queer lot. Let me take your hat. (*Removes POLLY's hat.*) You mustn't mind what I say; I'm a privileged character in this house. My name is—that is, my real name is Mary O'Brien, but they made me change it to Marie. (*Cautiously.*) Sh! I'm a French maid now, ye know.

POLLY (*laughingly*). I understand, Marie. Your secret shall be safe with me.

MARIE (*admiringly*). My, and ain't ye the sweet young thing! (*Suddenly.*) Say, you don't spake French, do ye?

POLLY. Only a few words. Why?

MARIE. Then fer the love of Ireland keep them few to yerself or I'll never know what yer driving at. Not that it makes any difference. I'll kape my job anyhow. The only reason I've kept it as long as I have is because I'm Irish.

POLLY (*curiously*). What has that to do with the holding of your position?

MARIE. Faith, they're afraid to discharge me. (*POLLY*

laughs. MARIE *throws a quick glance about room.*) Sh! Don't think I'm a bold or designing creature, but I like ye, and the talk I'm making now is fer yer own good. This is a queer lot yer going to mix with, and the sooner ye find it out the better. They're a bunch of snobs.

POLLY (*doubtfully*). Snobs?

MARIE. Sure. Snobs is what I said.

POLLY (*brightly*). Oh, I know—

MARIE (*interrupting*). No, ye don't. If ye did, ye wouldn't be here.

HARKINS *enters from R., crosses majestically to C. D. and exits.*

POLLY. Who—who is that gentleman?

MARIE (*puzzled*). Gentleman? (*Laughs as it dawns on her.*) That's Harkins, the butler.

POLLY (*sheepishly*). Oh, he's a servant.

MARIE. Yes. He's the other servant that predominates in the front of the house with meself, but I'm thinking that each day will be me last.

POLLY (*laughingly*). It'll be your own fault. Remember, you are Irish.

MARIE (*laughs.*) Sure, I'm forgettin'. I'm lolly-gaggin' here with ye, and I should be takin ye to yer room and makin' ye wan of us, only far be it from me to wish anythin' that bad on ye.

POLLY (*sweetly severe*). Marie, you mustn't. They aren't as bad as you paint them, I'm sure.

MARIE (*sniffs*). It's little ye know what's before ye. Faith, they're only half human, with the exception of Master Baldwin, and he's the biggest scamp unhung.

POLLY (*laughingly and chidingly*). Now, now, Marie, you musn't; and I won't listen to any more.

MARIE. Faith, I don't mean he's a villain like in the movies. He's only spoiled. But at that—(*shakes her head disparagingly*) ye know, he's the only son—handsome, and—well, the way he can get rid of money. (*Throws up both hands in horror.*) His first name is Baldwin and his middle name is Broke. And—but what's the use. He

won't listen to ye, for he's the sort of young man who has his pedigree catalogued. Ye'll know all about him the first time he glimpses yer purty face. And them two girls! Did ye see them wid their maids of beauty a-dollin' em up? (*Shrugs in despair.*)

POLLY (*thoughtfully*). Baldwin! I like the name—Baldwin!

Enter BALDWIN, C. D. He comes in with a rush but stops abruptly as he hears his name mentioned. Looks inquiringly from POLLY to MARIE. MARIE discovers him on the instant and signals POLLY in pantomime of his presence. POLLY turns slowly and faces BALDWIN.

BALDWIN (*to MARIE*). Well?

MARIE (*nervously*). Yes, sir. This—this is the new—the new—faith, she's Polly—beg pardon, sir; Miss Polly Perkins.

BALDWIN (*casts a quick, appraising glance at POLLY, smiles and extends his hand cordially*). And I am Baldwin Beverly. Welcome. (*Warmly clasps POLLY's hand. MARIE shrugs.*)

POLLY. Thank you, Mr. Beverly. (*Her eyes drop before his ardent gaze and she bashfully draws away from him.*)

BALDWIN (*looks about, apparently in search of the other members of the family*). Where are—say, where is everybody? (*To MARIE.*) Where's mother, Marie?

POLLY (*breaking in*). She is telephoning your father of my arrival.

BALDWIN (*still puzzled*). But the girls, Marie? What?

MARIE (*helplessly*). Faith, the Lord in Heaven only knows.

BALDWIN (*to MARIE, briskly*). Well, you trot along. I'll take care of Miss Perkins.

MARIE (*at R., near exit*). Yes, sir. (*Aside.*) Well, anyhow, I warned her. (*Dubiously shakes head and exits R.*)

BALDWIN (*glances about to make sure they are alone. Places a chair for POLLY at C.*) Now then—(*briskly*) while mother is on her merry way, sit down and tell me all about

yourself. (*POLLY hesitates and then sits as directed. He goes on briskly and cheerfully.*) Your name is Polly Perkins. You're right off a farm; young and very pretty; you need protection. (*She attempts to rise, but he places his hands on her shoulders and gently forces her back.*) You have some money—which is an excellent alibi in time of need—and somebody, evidently not knowing my father, appointed him your guardian and general superintendent of your money. Then you packed your trunk—

POLLY (*interrupting*). No trunk. Suitcase, bag and—

BALDWIN (*breaking in*). Never mind. There's been many a country girl who came to the big city without a trunk and still made her fortune. (*Speaking briskly and forcibly, both hands on the back of her chair.*) But here's the puzzling thing. Think of the size of this great big world, Polly, and wonder that you should find your way to this identical little spot, right here. Then, again, think of the millions and millions of people in this great big world and wonder that I should be the one to meet you face to face, right here, in this same little spot. Think! Isn't that the most wonderful thing you've ever heard of? (*She turns and looks up into his face, in uneasy agitation, and attempts to rise. He smiles and again forces her to sit.*) Now don't be frightened. What's a little conversation between friends? I realize that you're not doing much of the talking—merely telling me all about yourself, but go on—I'm a good listener. Of course I can readily understand that it would be an easy matter for me to meet an ugly girl. I meet that kind every day. But what I can't understand is, why I suddenly have become the luckiest chap in all the world by meeting the prettiest girl in all the world.

POLLY (*unable to restrain herself longer, springs to her feet and confronts BALDWIN with sweet dignity*). Mr. Beverly, please!

BALDWIN (*soothingly*). There, there. Now you mustn't get peevish. Why, there's no cause for peevishness. All I want is one sweet little kiss from you.

POLLY (*shrinking away from him, horrified*). You—you—want what?

BALDWIN. Oh, I say, now ; cut out the tragic air. What's a little kiss—between friends? (*She looks wildly about as he slowly approaches her with insinuating smile. He seizes her by the wrist and is just about to kiss her, when*)—

Enter MARIE from R.

MARIE (*loudly*). Master Baldwin, yer mother says Miss Polly is to come up stairs. (BALDWIN releases POLLY, faces MARIE and gives her a heavy scowl. POLLY, with a glad cry of relief, runs to MARIE, turns, looks scornfully at BALDWIN and exits with MARIE'S arm protectingly about her. BALDWIN gazes after them a moment, laughs carelessly, then his manner changes to a thoughtful one. He strokes his chin in a meditative way.)

BALDWIN. Shucks! Love-making is fast becoming a lost art with me. That's two kisses I've lost within the hour.

QUICK CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE: *Same as Act I. One week later. Late afternoon.*

At rise GERALDINE is discovered curled up on sofa, reading a novel. HORTENSE is at piano, playing and singing a rag time song in exaggerated manner. Her music serves as curtain rises. Both are attired in simple afternoon frocks.

GERALDINE (*as the curtain is well up, throws book down, rises to a sitting posture and cries*). Hortense! Hortense!

HORTENSE. Well?

GERALDINE. For the love of Romeo, have a heart. I can't read. That's terrible!

HORTENSE (*injured tone*). There you go. Every time I try to practice, you want me to stop.

GERALDINE. Say, I wouldn't mind it so much if your music "fit" the scenes in my story. But it never does. While you're sawing off that ragtime, the characters in

my book are face to face with death. And when they are fox-trotting in chapter nine they've got to keep step to your awful conception of "The Maiden's Prayer" or "Hearts and Flowers."

HORTENSE. You seem to forget that I went way to Paris for that music.

GERALDINE (*maliciously*). If you did, you forgot to bring it back. The nearest ten-cent store is as far as you ever went for music.

HORTENSE (*aside*). Jealous person!

GERALDINE (*suddenly rising*). Say, sis, what do you make of this Polly person?

HORTENSE (*rising from stool and leaning thoughtfully against front of piano*). I haven't quite "made" her yet, but I'm inclined to think she has designs on Baldwin.

GERALDINE (*surprised*). Good Lord! (*Laughs.*) On his money, I suppose. No, you're wrong. Why, they don't even speak.

HORTENSE. There is something the matter with him.

GERALDINE (*dryly*). There always was.

HORTENSE. She's trying to reform the family.

GERALDINE. Designing creature.

HORTENSE (*thoughtfully*). Hum!

GERALDINE (*frowns in perplexity*). Hum!

HORTENSE. Well, she can't reform me.

GERALDINE (*dryly*). I'm quite sure of that.

HARKINS *enters from R.*

HARKINS. Beg pardon. Your mother wishes me to inform you that Mrs. Feather-Stone and Mrs. Chadfield have phoned to say they will call this afternoon. (*Bows, crosses to C. D. and exits.*)

HORTENSE. Huh! Wonder what they want?

GERALDINE. It's easier to imagine what they *don't* want.

Enter BALDWIN, L. He is attired in conventional afternoon dress and carries hat, walking stick and light-colored gloves. The girls are just about to exeunt R. when he discovers them.

BALDWIN. I say, girls. (*They turn, he throws a searching glance about the apartment, showing signs of disappointment at not discovering POLLY.*) Have you—have you seen Polly? (*Both girls laugh teasingly.*)

HORTENSE (*teasingly*). Poor little brother. He's lost his Polly.

GERALDINE. Say, Baldy, what's the use? She wouldn't speak to you anyway.

BALDWIN (*pleadingly*). Now girls, behave! She's not my Polly, and it's nothing to you whether she'd speak to me or not. (*Gloomily.*) It would serve me right if she never did. I've been a cad.

HORTENSE. What's there coming to me if I'll tell you where you can find her?

BALDWIN (*eagerly*). Gloves or candy?

HORTENSE. Both.

BALDWIN. You're on.

GERALDINE (*with mock severity, to HORTENSE*). You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

HORTENSE. Why?

GERALDINE. You could have gotten more. (*Laughs.*)

BALDWIN (*to HORTENSE*). Come on—where is she?

HORTENSE. On the water front—poor quarter of the town—angel of mercy stunt—run along.

BALDWIN *dashes madly to C. D. and exits.*

GERALDINE (*calling after him*). Size five and a half and at least five pounds. Don't forget. (*To HORTENSE.*) I'm declaring myself in on part of the five pounds.

HORTENSE. Welcome. More mystery. What's he want with her?

GERALDINE. Don't know; but I never saw him so completely in earnest before.

Enter MRS. B. from R., much excited. She is attired in a handsome afternoon gown.

MRS. B. (*wrings hands*). Oh, girls, girls—it's coming—it's coming.

HORTENSE (*thinking she's referring to the coming of the two ladies*). So you sent word, mother.

GERALDINE. But why "it's?" Why not "them" or "those?"

MRS. B. (*paces R. to L.*). You don't—you can't seem to understand. Things at your father's office are in desperate shape. The crash he so long has feared has come.

HORTENSE (*carelessly*). Oh, is *that* all? I thought you were talking about Mrs. Feather-Stone and Mrs. Chadfield.

MRS. B. (*shocked*). Hortense!

GERALDINE. Well, either are bad enough, goodness knows.

MRS. B. Oh, you poor darlings. You don't realize what you are saying—what it means to you—to us all. (*Sobbingly.*) We—we shall have to give up our house and—and move into a Harlem flat—not an apartment, a flat. Do you hear? A flat in Harlem.

GERALDINE. Well, it could be worse. Brooklyn, for instance.

HORTENSE (*witheringly*). Don't mind her, mother.

GERALDINE. Besides, it's a grand little excuse to get rid of Harkins. I never did like him.

MRS. B. If that is intended for consolation, it fails of its purpose. What am I to do without servants? And you—you poor, innocent darlings—what will become of you?

GERALDINE. We'll have a janitor, won't we? (MRS. B. *throws up her hands in despair.*) Maybe we can train him to be kind and gentle.

HORTENSE (*witheringly*). She's hopeless, mother. Leave her out of it and tell me all your troubles.

MRS. B. Hortense, that's the first bit of real sympathy I've ever known you to display. Come up to my room—it's a long story. Besides (*sighs*), I suppose we must keep up appearances as long as we can, and you must change for the coming of those two human wireless stations. (*Crosses to R., followed by HORTENSE, and they exeunt.*)

GERALDINE. Guess I'll tag along. I'll climb into another gown while the climbing is good. (*At door R.*) Harlem! I wonder what they wear in Harlem? And if so, why? (*Exits R.*)

POLLY (*off R. of C. D.*). Never mind, Mr. Harkins; we'll get along just fine.

Enter POLLY, TOMMY and PUDGY, C. D. POLLY is between the children, holding each by a hand. The children feast their eyes on the magnificence they now encounter for the first time. Their clothing is ragged and their faces and hands very dirty. POLLY is fairly bubbling over with animation.

POLLY (*taking off TOMMY's cap*). That's a nice little man. Always remove your cap when you enter a room. (*PUDGY takes off her hat. POLLY laughs.*) No, no, Pudgy; not the ladies; just the gentlemen. But I'll take it. (*Puts the children's hats on a table and then stares at them in apparent dismay and doubt.*) Something's got to be done to remove at least a portion of that dirt.

TOMMY (*looking wildly around*). I—I want to go home.

PUDGY (*clutching his sleeve*). Tommy, you be good. It ain't a-goin' to hurt none. (*POLLY laughs merrily, while TOMMY struggles to escape PUDGY's clutch.*)

Enter MARIE from door L., recoils in astonishment as she sees the children.

POLLY (*discovering MARIE, cheerily*). Bless your heart. You're always happening in just at the psychological moment. Come here, you darling.

MARIE (*staring down at the children, with arms akimbo*). And where did you find 'em, and after that, what are they?

POLLY. Now, Marie, what do they look like? This is Tommy (*pats his head*), and this is Pudgy (*kisses her*). Children, this is Marie. (*They bow awkwardly.*) Now that proper introductions have been exchanged, we may all feel more at home.

MARIE. Ye've been down at the water-front agin, haven't ye?

POLLY. You dear; how did you guess it? But you remind me. Water! That's what I want, and plenty of it. (*TOMMY again looks longingly at door.*) Then I'll show you some real budding seeds once we get under that rich soil. (*Bustles about, removing hat and gloves.*)

MARIE (*aghast*). Sure, miss, 'tis the bathroom ye should lead 'em to, where there's oodles of water.

POLLY. Marie, you obey orders. I am going to commit the crime in this very room. It's not any worse for me to wash children here than for those two girls to have their beauty work done here, is it? Now, go! That's a dear. (*Shoves MARIE toward door L.*) Nice warm water, soap and towels, and hurry. (*MARIE, protesting, exits L. POLLY sits TOMMY and PUDGY beside each other on the sofa and then kneels on floor in front of them. Admiringly.*) Oh, you darlings! I love you, dirt and all. (*Smothers PUDGY in her arms and kisses her several times.*)

Enter BALDWIN, C. D., hastily, but draws back in surprise as his eyes light on the scene before him, and he partially conceals himself back of curtains.

TOMMY (*timidly*). Say, lady.

POLLY. Yes, dearie.

TOMMY. Why don't you kiss me? (*BALDWIN stares.*)

POLLY (*laughingly*). Why, Tommy, dear, it isn't proper for young women to kiss young men—unless they are engaged to each other. (*BALDWIN winces.*)

TOMMY. Oh!

PUDGY (*to TOMMY*). And you ain't engaged to her.

TOMMY. No, but I'd like to be. She's a corker! (*POLLY laughs and BALDWIN pantomimes his keen approval of TOMMY's judgment.*)

POLLY (*to TOMMY*). Now for that nice compliment I'm going to break the bonds of propriety and give you just one kiss. There. (*Kisses TOMMY on cheek. BALDWIN pantomimes jealousy. TOMMY rubs spot on his cheek.*) Why, Tommy, are you rubbing my kiss off?

TOMMY. No, lady—rubbing it in. (*POLLY laughs and again BALDWIN pantomimes his approval.*)

MARIE *enters L., with soap, water, towels, basin and pail of water.*

MARIE. Whew! Here ye are, miss. (*Places things on a table.*) But I'm thinking one application won't be enough.

(TOMMY casts an anxious glance at the soap and water and then at the door.)

POLLY (*rolling up sleeves and surveying children dubiously*). Maybe you're right, Marie; but we'll try. (To TOMMY.) I guess, Tommy, you come first. (TOMMY *digs his fingers in his eyes and whimpers*.) Why, the idea. You're not going to be a coward, are you?

PUDGY. Gee, lady, he ain't no *regular* coward. Soap and water's 'bout the only thing he's skeered of. (BALDWIN'S *shoulders shake with suppressed laughter and MARIE laughs heartily*.)

POLLY (*soothingly, to TOMMY*). Well, Tommy, you just show us now that you can be a hero, even when facing *this*. (*Indicates soap and water*.) Now, Marie, we're quite ready. (TOMMY *manfully pulls himself together for the coming ordeal, MARIE prepares basin of water and soap. POLLY makes onslaught on TOMMY's face*.)

MARIE (*delightedly*). Faith, I can see myself looking fer a new job. The missus will be after throwing a fit, and she won't be particular where she throws it, either, even if it's on the best rug in the room.

POLLY (*to the struggling TOMMY*). Hold still, Tommy—please. (*She struggles with him. BALDWIN, unable to longer control himself, tosses his hat and stick on a chair and comes briskly down to the scene of action, not stopping to remove his light-colored gloves*.)

BALDWIN (*grasping the struggling TOMMY—laughingly*). Here, you, be good!

POLLY (*aghast*). Mr. Beverly!

MARIE (*startled*). Master Baldwin!

BALDWIN (*laughs cheerily*). Don't mind me. Say, I've just got to be declared in on this. (*The children stare at him in open-mouthed astonishment*.)

POLLY (*to BALDWIN, coldly*). We were doing very nicely without you. Besides (*glances helplessly about*), I said I'd never speak to you again.

BALDWIN (*coaxingly*). Oh, come now, Polly—be a good fellow. I won't spoil your party. (To TOMMY.) Hold

quiet; nobody's going to hurt you. (*To POLLY, pleadingly.*) Please, Polly; mayn't I help?

POLLY (*hesitates, then smilingly*). Yes—you may. (*BALDWIN holds TOMMY, MARIE holds the various bathing utensils and POLLY briskly and thoroughly cleanses TOMMY's face and hands. By the time the operation is completed, BALDWIN's light gloves are soaked and much soiled. POLLY, as she gives TOMMY's face a final rub with towel, looks aghast at BALDWIN's gloves and points a finger at them in comic dismay. He follows the direction of her glance, holds up his hands in view of the audience and then laughs good naturedly.*)

POLLY. Gracious! Hadn't you better take off your gloves?

BALDWIN (*lugubriously*). Isn't it rather late? (*Laughs and removes gloves, throwing them carelessly into the basin of water.*)

POLLY (*standing back and appraising TOMMY*). My, what a dear, sweet boy you are. Now you're not dirty, are you?

TOMMY (*shakes head dolefully*). Not dirty—hungry!

POLLY and BALDWIN (*in chorus*). Hungry? (*TOMMY places a hand on his stomach and nods.*)

MARIE. Hungry? Bless my soul!

BALDWIN. By Jove, I really believe he is. (*At a loss to know just what to do.*)

POLLY (*taking command. To MARIE.*) Marie, you've been an angel in disguise thus far; now do it some more. Go and get something to eat for these poor little darlings.

MARIE (*hesitates*). I could take 'em down with me—

BALDWIN (*interrupting*). Move fast, Marie. You have your orders. (*Takes basin and things out of MARIE's hands.*) We will finish the—the renovating. Move along. (*MARIE smiles and hastily exits L. He bows low to POLLY, extending basin of water.*) At your service, Miss Polly.

POLLY (*smiles her approval at his conduct. To PUDGY.*) Now, dearie. (*PUDGY gives TOMMY a look as if to say, "I'll show you how it is done," and marches bravely to POLLY*

with uplifted face. POLLY *discovers* BALDWIN's *gloves in basin, picks them out, wrings out the water and lays them on table.* BALDWIN *laughs happily.* *She busies herself in the cleansing of PUDGY.* BALDWIN *laughs.*) Well, what's funny?

BALDWIN. I was just wondering what mother and the girls would say if they were to pop in here now.

POLLY (*startled*). Gracious! I never once thought of them.

BALDWIN (*with mock severity*). You know, you've no right to pull anything like this in the very best room in the house.

POLLY (*weakly*). I—I know, but—

BALDWIN (*laughs*). Say, you go just as far as you like. If they start anything, I'm with you to the finish. (POLLY *smiles and continues work on PUDGY.*)

POLLY. Hadn't I better get them out of here?

BALDWIN. Not on your life. (*Grins delightedly.*)

POLLY. How about you?

BALDWIN. I? Say, I'm having the time of my life. Have some more water? (*Thrusts basin at her.*)

POLLY. No, thanks. I guess she'll do now. (*Casts a critical survey over the children.*) Oh, dear me. I wish I had some clean clothes to slip on them.

BALDWIN (*with a sudden inspiration*). Say, leave that part to me. I know where they sell 'em.

POLLY (*impulsively*). You darling! (*Recoils abashed as she realizes what she has said.*)

BALDWIN (*delightedly*). Too late—you said it.

POLLY (*nervously*). I—I never meant to.

BALDWIN. Don't be frightened. A week ago I should have tried to take advantage of your mistake; but now—(*close to her with basin of water, touching her*) now I'll be decent.

POLLY (*drawing away from basin*). You'd better; you'll spill the water if you don't. (*He places basin on table.*) Besides, we're shamefully neglecting the children—

BALDWIN. Certainly. How dare you neglect the children! (*Pats them tenderly.*)

MARIE *enters from L., bearing tray containing cookies, candies, cake, etc. Sets tray on table at L.*

POLLY (*gaily*). Here we are. First call for luncheon. (BALDWIN and POLLY *gaily place the children at table and then seat themselves. MARIE prepares to serve them, smiling broadly at the idea.*)

BALDWIN (*thrusting plate of cookies at the children and POLLY*). This is jolly—a regular picnic. (*She smiles, he stuffs a cookie in his mouth.*)

MARIE. It's not for the likes of me to call yer attention to the clouds in the sky, but I'm thinkin' it's goin' to rain and spoil yer picnic.

POLLY. Eh?

MARIE. There do be callers comin'—Mrs. Feather-Stone and Mrs. Chadfield. They'll be wantin' their party. (POLLY *casts a startled glance about the room.*)

BALWIN. Shucks! (*Gesturing lightly with a handful of dainties*). Away with care. Let joy and mirth be unconfined. They may have their party; we shall have ours. But I say, Polly, where did you meet our "guests?" (*Indicating the children.*)

POLLY. Down at the water-front. The mother is hard working and deserving; the father—ugh! (*Hopeless gesture.*) I'm trying to straighten out their affairs.

BALDWIN (*admiringly*). Bully! I feel something tugging in me to lend a hand, too.

HARKINS *appears at C. D.*

HARKINS. Mrs. Herbert Feather-Stone, Mrs. Clarence Chadfield, Mr. Peter Hartleigh.

General consternation. HARKINS ushers in the announced callers, bows ceremoniously, looks in horrified amazement at the group at table, crosses to R. and exits. BALDWIN and POLLY rise and the newcomers stare dumbfounded at the strange scene.

MARIE (*aside*). The rain has come—picnic postponed.

BALDWIN (*advancing to greet the visitors*). How do you do, Mrs. Feather-Stone, Mrs. Chadfield—Peter, how are

you? (*The women, with lorgnettes to eyes, stare at POLLY and the children, ignoring BALDWIN. PETER fixes monocle to eye and stands transfixed with curiosity. POLLY and the children fidget-uneasily under the strain. MARIE turns her back to conceal her broad grin.*)

PETER (*finally*). My word!

BALDWIN. Good! (*Seizes PETER's hand and shakes it vigorously*). Fine, Peter. I thought you never would come to.

MRS. F. (*to BALDWIN (haughtily)*). I trust we are not intruding.

BALDWIN (*heartily*). Certainly not. Won't you join our little party? (*Waves a hand.*) Quite informal, I assure you. And the cookies are delicious. (*MRS. F. is horrified.*)

MRS. C. (*aghast*). The very idea! (*BALDWIN shrugs.*)

MRS. F. (*to BALDWIN*). Your mother—she is expecting us?

BALDWIN. Surely. Harkins is on his merry way to announce your arrival. Leave it to Harkins. That's the best thing he does.

MRS. C. (*to MRS. F.*). How unfortunate! Let us remain over here until Mrs. Beverly is informed of our arrival.

MRS. F. Evidently some one has made a mistake. (*They withdraw to extreme R. and sit, staring superciliously at the group at L.*)

BALDWIN (*laughs easily. To PETER*). Peter, you're wretched company. (*Slaps him violently on the back. PETER winces from the blow.*) Come over here and join our party. (*Takes him by an arm and pulls him to the children's table.*) I want you to meet some real good friends of mine. Pudgy, this is Mr. Hartleigh, but call him Peter. He won't mind. (*PUDGY slides off her chair and bows awkwardly.*) Tommy, shake hands with Peter. He's a queer looking animal, Tommy, but he won't bite. (*TOMMY slides from his chair and timidly extends a hand. PETER is still in a trance-like condition and BALDWIN grasps his hand and gives it to TOMMY, then slaps him on back.*) That's a good fellow, Peter. Fine! You've met Miss Perkins—also Marie. Now sit down. The luncheon is perfect.

PETER (*struggling to gain control over his benumbed condition*). My word! I cawn't quite gather the drift of this, don't you know. (*He is about to sink into chair at table, when*)—

MRS. C. (*sharply*). Mr. Hartleigh!

PETER (*straightens up quickly*). Yes, Mrs. Chadfield.

MRS. C. Have you quite forgotten yourself?

PETER (*in comic confusion*). Yes, ma'am—I—I cawn't even remember my own name.

MRS. F. (*to PETER*). Your conduct is quite impossible.

MRS. C. You should be gentleman enough to remember that we are under your protection.

MRS. F. And not desert us entirely. (*PETER, now more confused than ever, starts to cross to them, but BALDWIN slyly grabs his coattails and pulls him back into his chair.*)

BALDWIN (*to the visitors, courteously*). Ladies, you must forgive Peter. He's hardly himself today. (*PETER is a picture of misery. BALDWIN winks slyly at POLLY.*)

POLLY (*anxiously, aside to BALDWIN*). I'm afraid you're carrying the joke too far.

BALDWIN (*aside, to POLLY*). Hush! The real fun hasn't begun. Wait till mother arrives. (*POLLY gives a nervous start.*)

MRS. C. (*to MRS. F.*). I really believe these persons are talking about us.

MRS. F. (*peering at the opposite group through lorgnette—aside*). Ugh! What common people! Where can they have come from?

BALDWIN (*to PETER, showing a plate of cookies under his nose*). Do have some more!

PETER (*showing plate away*). Confound it, Baldwin, I don't want any more. I haven't had jolly well any yet. (*Miserably.*) I—I want to go home. (*He again attempts to rise, but BALDWIN pulls him back into chair.*)

MARIE (*crosses to the ladies—respectfully*). Shall I take your things, ma'am? (*The ladies fairly freeze MARIE with a look and then frigidly turn their backs on her. MARIE hesitates an instant, then returns to her former position at L., calm and unruffled.*)

POLLY (*innocently, aside to BALDWIN, indicating MRS. F.*). Is she one of the "400"?

BALDWIN (*aside*). No; one of the "57."

Enter HARKINS from R. He stands aside to permit the entrance of MRS. B. HORTENSE and GERALDINE—Picture: General consternation, and all rise from their chairs and face the new arrivals, BALDWIN stepping in front of POLLY, protectingly.

MRS. B. (*astounded, gazing from one party to the other*). Will somebody please have the goodness to explain? (HARKINS *exits C. D.*)

BALDWIN. It's all my fault, mother—

MRS. B. Silence! (*to MRS. F. and MRS. C.*). My dears, I can never forgive myself for allowing this unfortunate affair to happen in my house. Harkins has told me how you have been embarrassed—even insulted. (*To BALDWIN.*) As for you, sir (*to PETER*), and you, Peter, I am utterly at a loss to—

POLLY (*advances and confronts MRS. B.*). Mrs. Beverly, I alone am to blame—

MRS. B. (*furiously interrupting*). I shall be the judge of that, young woman. (*To MARIE.*) You may consider yourself no longer in my household. Go!

MARIE. Yes, ma'am. I had a hunch it was coming, so you don't surprise me much. (*Starts exit L.*)

BALDWIN (*to MARIE*). Wait, Marie. (*MARIE turns inquiringly*). Now, mother, listen. There's nobody going to "get in dutch" but me. I'm the chap. (*Grasps POLLY and gently shoves her back of him.*) I'm the big cause of it all. I brought these children here myself. But there's no crime in that—far from it. Miss Perkins and Marie were kind enough to assist me to wash and feed 'em. In fact, I forced them to. (*Winks slyly at POLLY.*)

MARIE (*aside, admiringly*). Ain't he the beautiful liar!

BALDWIN. As for Peter—well, can you imagine him doing anything wicked? (*PETER winces.*)

HORTENSE (*plaintively*). And he vowed he'd be true to me—alone!

PETER (*glumly*). I wish I were home.

GERALDINE. Fudge! I wish I had somebody to scold.

MRS. B. (*to Mrs. F. and Mrs. C.*). I ask your indulgence just for a moment longer, my dears. The room, and atmosphere, shall be immediately cleared. (*To BALDWIN.*) Since you have brought these ragamuffins here, you will be good enough to take them away again.

POLLY (*forcing BALDWIN aside and confronting MRS. B.*). Mrs. Beverly, I protest. He did not bring them here. (*BALDWIN attempts to stop her.*) No, no; you shall not be blamed for my thoughtlessness. Madam, I apologize for bringing in these children. I assure you that I had no intention of causing you embarrassment. I was thinking only of giving these poor children a treat. They pleaded to see my home. Your son and Marie fell into the spirit of the thing, and—that's all. But if you had a real mother's heart beating in your breast, you'd think twice before you drove these innocent children out of your house and spoiled perhaps the few moments of genuine pleasure they ever have known.

BALDWIN (*breaking in quickly*). She won't get a chance to do that. (*To PUDGY and TOMMY.*) Come, children; you're coming with your Uncle Dudley. He'll take you down to the big shop and have the man give you some regular dress-up, Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes. Then maybe you'll be received in *real* society. (*Meaning glance at the group R. He takes the children by the hand and leads them to C. D. Turns to PETER.*) I say, Peter, want to come along?

PETER (*astounded*). I? My word!

BALDWIN. Oh, come on. Buying clothes for little ragamuffins is the greatest little indoor sport in the world. (*To the children.*) Tell me before you go. Who do you like?

PUDGY (*indicating POLLY*). I like that nice lady.

TOMMY. So do I.

PUDGY (*indicating MARIE*). And I like her. She talks so funny. (*TOMMY nods his approval and both children scowl at the group at R. POLLY runs to the children and*

smothers them each in turn with caresses. BALDWIN gets his hat.)

BALDWIN. Goodbye, folks. When you see 'em again, they'll be so dressed up they won't speak to you. (BALDWIN grins cheerfully, sets hat rakishly on one side of head, clasps the hands of the children and they exeunt, he jauntily and the children waving a hand at POLLY and MARIE.)

MRS. B. (to POLLY). I shall take this matter up with your guardian. For the present, please retire to your own room. (POLLY, crestfallen, crosses to R. MARIE, in sympathy, starts to follow her, but is stopped by a commanding gesture from MRS. B.) Marie, go to your room. You shall hear from me later. (MARIE hesitates, turns and crosses to L.)

POLLY (appealingly, to MRS. B.). Please, Mrs. Beverly, do not punish Marie. She only obeyed orders.

MRS. B. Silence! Your guardian shall be the judge of that. Go! (POLLY exits R. and MARIE L., the former sadly and the latter with a defiant toss of her head.)

PETER (wiping face with handkerchief. To MRS. B.) I don't want to say a word against Baldwin, but he really has a deucedly convincing way with him at times. (MRS. B. favors him with a scornful look.)

MRS. C. (witheringly). So few men nowadays have any will of their own.

MRS. F. (to MRS. B.). We should be going, my dear. I can see you are quite upset.

MRS. B. (hastily). No, no; you really mustn't think of going. Hortense has some new music. (The ladies wince. GERALDINE smiles maliciously. HORTENSE crosses to PETER and they engage in pantomime conversation.)

MRS. C. Some other time, dear.

MRS. F. (quickly). Yes, we were just passing, you know. (Moves toward C. D.) In fact, we have another engagement.

MRS. C. (following). Yes, I'm afraid we will be late. (At C. D.)

MRS. F. Remember us to your husband, dear. (At C. D.)

MRS. B. (*following them, calling off R.*). Harkins! (HARKINS appears. The two women shake hands with Mrs. B. and the usual farewell salutations are exchanged. HARKINS escorts the women off R. MRS. B. calling off after them). Be sure to come again—soon, won't you?

GERALDINE (*all through foregoing scene has had the time of her life*). Mother, what was the use of asking them to come again. They won't.

MRS. B. (*coldly*). And why, pray?

GERALDINE. Can you dream of them calling on us in our Harlem flat?

MRS. B. (*is about to make a short retort, but discovers HORTENSE and PETER, who are now close to each other, and as she looks they kiss each other*). Well, young man, what have you to say in your defense?

PETER (*nervously drawing away from HORTENSE*). I—I don't know what to say, ma'am. I don't seem to be able to talk.

HORTENSE (*defensively*). Peter has explained his part in the affair to my entire satisfaction.

GERALDINE (*dryly*). His alibi is perfect. I could hear the report clear over here.

MRS. B. (*grimly, to PETER*). I am waiting, Mr. Hartleigh.

PETER (*helplessly*). Oh, Lord! (*Looks appealingly at HORTENSE.*)

GERALDINE. Well, Peter, if you'll take my advice, the best way to square accounts is to introduce Hortense and me to a rising young ice cream soda. (PETER picks up his hat, greatly relieved.)

MRS. B. (*aghast*). Geraldine! (*Turns to exit R.*) I give up. I wash my hands of you. Your father is quite right. You are thoroughly spoiled. (*Exits R.*)

PETER (*calling after MRS. B.*). By jove, there's one of the family jolly well not spoiled. (*Kisses HORTENSE effusively.*) My word, what a time! Come on, girls. You may have all the ice cream in the man's jolly shop. And if that isn't enough, I'll make the scoundrel send out for more.

GERALDINE. Peter, for the first time in many, many

years I have nothing to say. Your generosity overwhelms me. (PETER, *between the girls*, rushes them laughingly out C. D.)

As it is now late afternoon, all stage lights are slightly dimmed, which will also tend to create an impressive atmosphere for the entrance of BEVERLY.

Enter BEVERLY, C. D., followed by HARKINS, who takes his hat. BEVERLY'S apparel is in a somewhat disheveled condition and he appears utterly dejected and physically weary. He walks unsteadily to a chair near C., sinks wearily into it, and with elbows on knees and head between his hands, becomes absorbed in apparently gloomy thoughts. HARKINS moves about the room, putting things in order and at intervals pauses and casts an anxious glance at his master.

HARKINS (*coughs discreetly*). Is there anything I can get you, sir?

BEVERLY (*raising head, dazedly*). Eh? No, thank you, Harkins—nothing. (*Relapses into his former attitude.*)

HARKINS (*sympathetically*). I thought, perhaps, sir, you'd want a bit of Scotch, sir.

BEVERLY (*impatiently*). No, no—nothing. (*Raises head and speaks more kindly.*) Thanks for your thoughtfulness, Harkins, just the same.

HARKINS. Yes, sir; thank you, sir. (*About to retire, then turns*). Shall I tell Mrs. Beverly you've come in, sir?

BEVERLY (*after a thoughtful pause*). No. (HARKINS *bows and starts, exit L.*) Stop! (HARKINS *awaits orders.*) You may ask Miss Perkins to come here. Say it is important—that's all. (HARKINS *bows, crosses to R. and exits.* BEVERLY *rises and paces to and fro several moments before speaking.*) It's an utter rout. That Bates crowd was too strong for me. Confound 'em, I hope they're satisfied now! (*Paces angrily.*) They had dollars where I didn't have pennies. (*Laughs grimly.*) If I'd had dollar for dollar with them, Lord, what a battle it would have been! Polly *must* come to my rescue.

Enter POLLY from R. Her face shows signs of a recent

crying spell and she enters dabbing a handkerchief to her eyes.

POLLY (*timidly*). You sent for me, sir?

BEVERLY (*turns quickly and confronts her—brusquely*). Yes. Won't you be seated? (*He waves a hand at a chair convenient to her and she bows and sits. He nervously paces to and fro, striving to approach the matter on his mind.*) Polly, I wish to speak with you regarding a very important matter. (*Clears his throat.*)

POLLY (*misunderstanding him*). Oh, Mr. Beverly, I'm so sorry it happened. But if you could have seen the sweet little darlings, I'm sure you wouldn't have cared.

BEVERLY (*mystified*). Sweet little darlings? What are you talking about?

POLLY (*relieved*). Oh, I thought you knew. It happened a little while ago, and—

BEVERLY (*impatiently interrupting*). Yes, yes; but never mind. You may tell me some other time. (*Clears throat nervously.*) Polly, your money has been placed in my hands, and absolutely with no strings attached to it. I can, according to the wording of the papers, do with it anything I choose and not be held legally responsible for its—ah, disposition. Your father had a world of confidence in me and my integrity.

POLLY. Yes, sir; I know he did. He often told me that I could place absolute faith in you, sir.

BEVERLY (*agitatedly*). I—I came pretty near doing a contemptible thing. Listen, child. I want to make a confession. When your money was placed in my hands I fully determined to use it in my personal financial affairs—and without consulting you. (*She half rises.*) Wait, Polly. But when you came here, I—I never dreamed you are what you are, and your money suddenly appealed to me as a sacred trust. I vowed that whatever happened, your inheritance would not be touched. Polly, it was a terrible temptation, for they were after me, tooth and nail. And today—they got me! (*Brokenly.*) Every dollar I had in the world is gone!

POLLY (*excitedly to feet*). No, no, Mr. Beverly—

BEVERLY (*sadly*). It's the absolute truth. (*Heavily*.) I am a ruined man.

POLLY. Oh, there must be some way—(*sinks into chair*.)

BEVERLY (*suddenly*). There is. Your money. (*She starts*.) Oh, I know I have no right to use it; but it might be the means of putting me back on my feet. It means salvation to me—to you—to all!

POLLY (*rising and smiling sweetly*). Then why hesitate? (*He starts in surprise*.) Listen to me, please. I used to think that money was the one essential thing in this world. I came here just a week ago today, and I've had that idea completely knocked out of my head. I came here expecting to find a happy home, plenty of money with which to make others happy, and—(*sighs*) but what a disappointment! If money and the striving for it has the effect I've seen it have on other folks, then I want to be a pauper the rest of my life!

BEVERLY. Why, Polly, you don't know—you don't realize what money means to those accustomed to having it. You don't realize its potency, its fascination.

POLLY. I grant you that. But tell me what I can do to get rid of mine.

BEVERLY (*eagerly, and drawing a legal paper from an inside pocket*). This, Polly, is a power of attorney. You sign this and in case—in case I lose—there can be no legal obligation, and morally I shall feel justified in the knowledge that you gave me the money freely and without coercion.

POLLY (*studies a moment*). Money can do lots of good in the right hands. I had planned to spend mine in the right way. (*Studies his face an instant*.) But something tells me that—that daddy would want me to trust you, and I will. I will sign. (*Smiles*.)

BEVERLY. Polly, you're a brick! (*To desk, lays paper on it, picks up pen and extends it to her*.)

POLLY (*to desk, takes pen*). If we lose, I know I shall be happy. If we win, perhaps I shall. (*Signs*.)

BEVERLY (*picks up paper and places it in his pocket*).

Something seems to tell me that this—your money—is going to—

POLLY (*interrupting softly*). To make us all happy, because we shall make others happy—that's why.

Enter YOUNG, C. D.

YOUNG (*drawlingly*). Ex-cuse me, please. (BEVERLY and POLLY turn to him in surprise). I couldn't make anybody understand what I wanted in here, so I jest came in anyhow.

BEVERLY (*cordially*). That's all right, Mr. Young. Come right in. (YOUNG eyes BEVERLY suspiciously). Have you brought the note with you?

YOUNG (*nonplussed at his cordial reception*). Jest a moment, Mr. Beverly. I don't understand why you are so anxious for me to come in.

BEVERLY. It's a long story. (*Meaning glance at POLLY.*) but the young lady here has much to do with it. (*Briskly stepping to desk.*) You can cancel that note and your money's ready. (*Picks up pen and check book.*)

YOUNG (*looks curiously from POLLY to BEVERLY, draws note cautiously from an inside pocket and goes to desk*). Well, there ain't nothin' like doin' business with a business man. (*Looks inquiringly at POLLY.*)

BEVERLY. Oh, excuse me, Mr. Young. This is my ward, Miss Perkins. (POLLY acknowledges introduction with a nod and smile.)

YOUNG. Pleased to meet you, Miss Perkins. (*Writes on back of note and hands it to BEVERLY, who in turn hands him the check.*) There ye be, Mr. Beverly. (*Scrutinizes check closely.*) It says on the note, "payable in gold." But I reckon your check is o. k.

BEVERLY (*laughs*). Perfectly. And now, good afternoon. Sorry you're in such a hurry. (*Extends YOUNG's hat to him.*)

YOUNG (*takes hat*). Oh, I ain't in no particular rush. I got time for a leetle social chat.

BEVERLY (*with a hand on YOUNG's shoulder and showing him toward C. D.*). But I haven't. Some other time.

(*Clasps YOUNG's hand and shakes it vigorously*). Glad you called, Mr. Young.

YOUNG (*framed in C. D.*). Kinder glad myself. (*Exhibits check and chuckles*.) Any time, Mr. Beverly, I kin be of any service to ye, let me know; it's sure a pleasure to do business without any back-talk 'bout paying an honest debt. (*Smirks at POLLY, bows to BEVERLY and exits C. D.*)

BEVERLY (*crosses to POLLY—laughingly*). At least the new money has made one soul happy. (*She smiles*.) But it's going to do more. It's going to keep the roof over our heads. This house is all clear, Polly, thanks to you. (*Takes both her hands*.)

POLLY (*softly*). I'm so glad, guardie.

BEVERLY (*kisses her cheek*). Bless your heart! I'll go now and tell Jane the good news. She won't have to move into a Harlem flat. (*Exits R.*)

POLLY (*sighs happily, glances about the apartment, goes to C. D., looks off R.*) I wonder how Baldwin got along with the children?

She again smiles, goes to piano, sits and runs her fingers dreamily over the keys, firmly breaking into chorus of "Love's Old Sweet Song," playing it with much expression. As she finishes chorus, MARIE enters from L. She crosses to piano and lights piano lamp. The light shines full on POLLY's face. She is about to speak, then realizes the impressiveness of the scene and softly tiptoes across to L. and exits. As MARIE exits, BALDWIN enters, C. D. He carries a bouquet of roses. As he is well inside POLLY begins to sing the words of the chorus sweetly and dreamily:

"Just a song at twilight,
When the lights are low.
And the flick'ring shadows
Softly come and go.
Tho' the heart be weary,
Sad the day and long,
Still to us at twilight
Comes Love's old song.
Comes Love's old sweet song."

(*The last line is sung very softly and impressively. BALDWIN, who has stood spellbound during POLLY's singing of the chorus, now slowly raises the flowers to his face.*)

SLOW CURTAIN.

SECOND CURTAIN.

BALDWIN stands behind POLLY, who is seated at the piano with both arms over her shoulders, and holding the roses in front of her. She inhales their fragrance, then slowly lifts her face and smiles up into his.

SLOW CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE: *A month later. Same as Act II, except that the expensive furnishings have given way to the more modest appearing fittings, and the apartment looks more refined and comfortable. It is about 6:30 P. M., the shades are down and stage lights on. Curtain music, "Love's Old Sweet Song."*

At rise stage is clear. Doorbell rings off C. MARIE enters from L., crosses to C. D., exits and re-enters, followed by HARKINS. He is now dressed in ordinary business clothes and carries his hat in his hand.

MARIE (*not unkindly*). Oh, 'tis you, is it? What do you want, and what do you mean by coming to the front door, Ain't the side door good enough fer ye?

HARKINS (*humbly*). I beg pardon, miss; but one question at a time. I want to see Mr. Beverly.

MARIE. Well, ye'll have to submit plans and specifications of the object of yer call to me, Mr. Harkins.

HARKINS. I thought perhaps I could obtain my old position. (*Eagerly.*) What do you think?

MARIE. There ain't a thing happening along that line, Mr. Harkins. When the master let you out a month ago, 'twas his idea not only to cut down expenses, but to do

away forever with an expensive piece of junk like an English butler. (HARKINS *lifts both hands in horrified protest.*) Now, why didn't ye come to the side or back door?

HARKINS (*with deep feeling*). I just couldn't bring myself to the thought of passing by the old front door. I was stationed there a good many years—and I wanted to see how it still looked.

MARIE. Well, I know just about how ye feel, Mr. Harkins. Ye sure did take a world of pride in the opening and closing of that front door. I don't believe there's anybody in the world that could a-done it better than ye did, Mr. Harkins.

HARKINS (*proudly*). I'm quite sure of that, Marie. (*Resentfully.*) And I'd a-been a openin' and a closin' of it yet if it hadn't a-been for that—

MARIE (*raising a protesting hand*). Stop right there! I won't allow ye to mention Miss Polly's name. It's not fer the likes of ye to be a-speaking of it.

HARKINS (*sullenly*). 'Twas she that got me discharged.

MARIE. And would ye listen to that, now? A big, strong, husky brute of a man like ye, blaming a slip of a girl like Polly fer the losing of yer situation. Sure, man, it just happened in the natural course of human events. Every foreign servant in the house was given their notice and let go.

HARKINS. Every *foreign* servant? How about you?

MARIE. Sure, and I'm not a foreigner. I'm Irish! Ah, it's funny about the rich. As soon as they get dizzy with money, they get crazy to import things. French touring cars and German chauffeurs; English butlers and muffins; Japanese stewards and Turkish rugs; Swiss watches and cheese; Russian furs and caviar; Italian cooks and French maids. B'gorry, the only thing American they'll tolerate is money.

HARKINS (*dropping his English accent and speaking in natural tone of voice.*) Ain't that the solemn truth?

MARIE (*surprised*). Say, what talk have ye now? And yer not English?

HARKINS. Only when I'm English butlering. At other times I'm a regular American citizen. (*Sighs deeply.*) However, I see no use in keeping up the deception further.

MARIE. Mr. Harkins, I'm surprised at ye.

HARKINS. And why? Aren't you a French maid, born in Ireland?

MARIE. True fer ye; but the good Lord be praised I've come into me own again. Since Miss Polly came, now, b'gorry, me name is just plain Mary-O'Brien.

HARKINS. Well, I'm sure I bear you no ill-will. (*Sighs.*) I had a good job, and if I do say it myself, I was a first-class butler and used a select brand of English accent.

MARIE. Shame on ye, fer the deceivin' villain ye are. I can't give ye back yer job, but I can give you some advice. Drop the idea of butlering and go out and get ye a man's-sized job. Sure, grab a pick and shovel. Maybe ye'll get a crick in yer back, but it won't be from bowing and scraping to a snobbish bunch of Feather-Stones and Chadfields. Now, let that soak into ye, Mr. Harkins.

HARKINS (*horrified*). Me? Me with a pick and shovel, digging a ditch? Lord, what would become of my dignity?

MARIE. Sure, and if the ditch was deep enough, 'twould cover up yer dignity. But I've lolly-gagged long enough with ye. I have more important things to do. Are ye leaving by the side or back door?

HARKINS. Just a moment, Marie—

MARIE. Plain Mary, if ye please, Mr. Harkins.

HARKINS. They tell me, Mary, if ye please, that things have changed greatly in this house—since Miss Polly came.

MARIE. Changed? Faith and ye wouldn't know the folks now. Ye should see the way they live. 'Tis a blessed atmosphere that prevails here. And Miss Polly's the cause of it all. Sure, I don't know just where New England is, but Miss Polly came from there, so it must be just between Heaven and Ireland.

MRS. B. (*off L., sweetly*). Never mind, Hortense. I shall do very well now. You may go. (HARKINS *edges toward C. D.*)

MARIE (*guardedly*). Ye notice the difference in the mis-

sus' voice? Sure, she's all gentleness and kindness. But, be on yer way, and good luck go with ye.

HARKINS (*guardedly*). Thank you, Marie—Mary, I mean. Goodbye—and I believe I'll look for a pick and shovel. (*Exits C. D.*)

MARIE (*calling after him, laughingly*). More power to ye, Mr. Harkins.

Enter MRS. BEVERLY, from L. She is in a modest house dress, amply protected by a cover-all apron, with sleeves rolled to elbows and hands coated thickly with flour. Altogether she presents a picture of a sweet but dignified matron wrapped up in her household affairs.

MRS. B. Ah, Mary. Have the men come home yet?

MARIE. No, ma'am. But they should be along any minute now, ma'am.

MRS. B. (*carefully holding hands to avoid flour*). I've got my shortcake all ready for the oven, and I don't want to go any further with it until they come. (*Laughs happily.*) Mary, just think. Mrs. Ralph Beverly making a shortcake—look at my hands.

MARIE (*cheerily*). Ah, sure and 'tis a picture ye are, ma'am—and yer hands, 'tis exquisite they are.

MRS. B. (*laughingly*). Now, now, Mary; none of your Irish blarney. I used to make a very acceptable shortcake, once upon a time. But now (*dubiously*) I'm afraid domestic science has become a lost art with me.

MARIE. Faith, ma'am, I wouldn't say that. Sure, the eggs ye boiled this morning fer breakfast was charming.

MRS. B. (*smiles*). Thanks, Mary. But I must go back to the kitchen. I thought I heard voices a moment ago, and—

MARIE. So ye did, ma'am. Mr. Harkins called to see if ye could overlook the fact that he once did English butlering fer a living, and could ye give him a job where there was work attached to it.

MRS. B. I don't believe we can. Since we are all working around here, now, there doesn't seem to be any vacancy for an outsider, does there?

MARIE. I was after telling him that, ma'am.

Enter BEVERLY, C. D. He is dressed in a neat dark business suit. MARIE takes his hat.

BEVERLY (*to MRS. B., greeting her with outstretched arms*). Hello, girlie! My, how homey we do look.

MRS. B. (*throws both arms about his neck, leaving the imprint of her floured hands on the back of his coat*). You silly boy. (*They kiss—MARIE smiles indulgently.*)

BEVERLY (*with back to audience, showing flour. Playfully, to MARIE*). Don't mind us, Mary. You know we're enjoying our second honeymoon.

MARIE. Sure I wasn't laughing at yer love making. (*Grins broadly.*)

BEVERLY. At what, then?

MARIE (*pointing*). At the back of yer coat, sir. (*MRS. B. discovers flour marks on his coat and laughs heartily. BEVERLY twists and turns in an attempt to see back of his coat. Failing in this, he finally removes it and holds it up in both hands.*)

BEVERLY. By George! The imprint of a woman's hands. (*Laughs.*) It's a mighty good thing I didn't have it there when I came in.

MRS. B. (*to MARIE*). Mary, remove the evidence. (*MARIE starts to take coat.*)

BEVERLY (*hastily drawing coat out of her reach*). No, you don't. You leave it alone. That "evidence" shall forever be retained as one of my dearest possessions.

MRS. B. (*laughing softly*). You'll look nice going to business with a reproduction of my hands on the back of your coat.

BEVERLY (*reverently*). I shall never wear that coat again.

MRS. B. (*happily*). Well, this is no place for me. I hear the call of the kitchen. Come, Mary. (*The women ex. eunt L.*)

BEVERLY (*following MRS. B. with his eyes*). Bless her heart!

Enter POLLY, R.

POLLY (*advancing to greet BEVERLY*). Guardie! (*Stops abruptly, puzzled.*) Why, what in the world—

BEVERLY (*interrupting her and displaying floured back of coat*). Look, Polly— isn't that simply wonderful?

POLLY (*mystified*). It's flour, isn't it?

BEVERLY (*tenderly and impressively*). It's more than flour, Polly. It's the imprint of two hands that belong to the most wonderful woman in 'all the world—my wife! (*POLLY smiles and reaches for coat; he withdraws it.*) No, Polly; you mustn't brush it off. But I apologize. There is another wonderful woman in the world—you!

POLLY (*laughs*). Guardie, you haven't had your Scotch so early in the evening, have you?

BEVERLY. Not a drop. I'm trying to make you understand, Polly, that my wife is not above cooking meals for an old fossil like me, and that you—you are responsible for me getting something to eat that I can pronounce and digest—

POLLY (*kissing him*). Guardie, you're not an old fossil. How are things at the office?

BEVERLY (*enthusiastically*). Fine! Just fine, Polly. It's going to take a little time to whip things into shape, but we'll do it. Besides—(*with a glance at the coat in his hands*)—how can anybody help doing things when *everybody* works with you? (*Admiringly.*) Polly, you're a wonder. Even Baldwin has gone to work. (*Laughs.*) It's hard to make 'em believe in New York that Baldwin is clerking in our village grocery.

POLLY. Well, and why not? He had to do something. *You* wouldn't give him a job.

BEVERLY (*grimaces*). I didn't have any work that he could do.

POLLY. He is a splendid grocery clerk.

BEVERLY (*laughs good-naturedly*). Yes, and I'm proud of him. By gad, I never knew 'twas in him! It's all due to you. But this won't do. I'll get a scolding if I don't change for dinner. Coming? (*Goes toward L. exit.*)

POLLY (*moving toward C. D., softly*). No, Guardie. I—I think I'll walk down the road a way.

BEVERLY (*teasingly*). All right. Tell him to make sure that our eggs are fresh. (*Grins broadly over a shoulder at her as he exits L.*)

POLLY, *abashed*, turns to exit C. D., when enter from R., HORTENSE, GERALDINE and PETER. HORTENSE carries a skein of worsted, a piece of linen and a needle. GERALDINE also has some fancy work.

HORTENSE (*discovering POLLY at C. D.*). Hello, dear. Going out?

POLLY. Just down the road a way. (*HORTENSE and GERALDINE sit.*)

GERALDINE (*smilingly. To POLLY.*) Oh, stay and talk to Peter.

PETER (*eagerly*). Yes, do. I've been dreadfully bored, don't you know.

POLLY (*smiles*). Some other time.

GERALDINE (*meaningly*). Oh, I know. (*Sighs.*) I wish I had somebody to walk down the road for.

POLLY (*smilingly*). I won't be long. (*Exits C. D.*)

HORTENSE (*referring to POLLY*). And we once thought she was an awful thing! (*Prepares her work.*)

GERALDINE. She's one girl in a million. (*Applies herself assiduously to her needle work.*)

PETER (*with a meaning glance at HORTENSE*). That is a libel, pure and simple. There's one more.

HORTENSE (*to PETER, with mock severity*). Now, Peter, no loafing. Hold this. (*Extends skein to him, he kneels on floor in front of her and she hooks skein over his thumbs and begins to wind it into a ball.*)

GERALDINE. Peter, you really look romantic in that position.

PETER. By Jove, I don't feel so. How long must I stay here on my jolly knees?

HORTENSE. Until this skein becomes a ball. But you may rest easy. There's no thinking attached to your work.

PETER. Ah, thanks. What's the bally idea? (*Nods head, indicating the girls' work.*)

HORTENSE. Charity, Peter. Sweet charity! Coming church bazaar.

PETER. My word! It's the first time in my life I ever did a thing for charity. By Jove, I feel really—I say, what's the word I want to use?

HORTENSE. I don't know. You have so many words, Peter.

GERALDINE (*to HORTENSE*). If Peter belonged to me, I should try to redeem him. (*PETER stares at her.*)

HORTENSE. What? Redeem him! It can't be done.

GERALDINE. You know he's not at all a bad chap at heart. He has the makings of a real man in him; but he'll never, never arrive with that English mannerism and mon-ocle tied to him. (*To PETER, earnestly.*) Peter, why don't you? (*HORTENSE shows interest.*)

PETER (*staring at her, rises slowly to feet*). What! Change the habits of a life time? My word! I cawnt—simply cawnt!

HORTENSE (*winding last of the skein—softly*). We thought so, too, Peter—but you see, don't you?

PETER (*bewilderedly*). Yes, I—I know, but you had material to work on.

HORTENSE. Now, see here, Peter, suppose we start with this. (*She takes monocle from him and lays it on table. He is dumbfounded, while GERALDINE nods her keen approval at HORTENSE's action.*) That's a joke, dear—no longer accepted as anything else by the *real* Englishmen.

PETER (*gaspingly*). I—I say, Hortense—my word!

HORTENSE. Now that we have done away with that awful affair, suppose we start to work dry-cleaning that terrible language you persist in using.

GERALDINE. Yes, Peter, I'm sure you can be cured. (*PETER stares helplessly from one to the other.*)

HORTENSE (*to PETER*). Let's commence on that. Now I shall give you a sentence, and you must repeat it after me, trying to follow closely my intonation and so forth, word for word. Now, let me think. (*Pause.*) Oh, yes. "Made-in-America" language, habits and dress are good

enough for me. Why imitate foreigners? (GERALDINE *claps hands in hearty approval.*)

PETER (*feeling for the accustomed monocle and desperately trying to think out sentence correctly before speaking it*). "Made-in-America" language—(*pauses*).

HORTENSE. Yes, yes; go on, Peter. You're doing very well.

PETER (*struggling mentally to remember the rest*). "Made-in-America" language—(*stops again*).

GERALDINE (*impatiently*). Don't repeat, Peter. Go right on.

PETER (*desperately*). "Made-in-America" language and other stuff is all to the good. Why steal foreign junk? (*The girls laugh and PETER mops his forehead with handkerchief.*)

HORTENSE. Fine, Peter! It wasn't word for word as I gave it to you, but you hit the true meaning and it came from the heart—that's what counts.

PETER (*all fussed up, relapsing into his English exaggeration again*). My word, that was jolly well done for me, wasn't it?

HORTENSE (*disappointedly*). Oh, now you've spoiled it all. How could you, Peter?

GERALDINE (*laughingly*). Oh, don't scold him, Hortense. Give him a chance. Remember, we didn't "find ourselves" in a day. Besides, he *is* trying.

HORTENSE. You're right, Geraldine. Well, we've made a start with him, anyhow. But there's still one other thing, Peter.

PETER (*weakly*). Oh, Lord!

GERALDINE. I believe I could find *more* than one.

HORTENSE (*to PETER*). And that's your oodles and oodles of money. Now, see here, Peter. What are you going to do about that? (PETER *gasps*.) You know, you simply can't go on having all that money. Besides—

PETER (*interrupting*). Great Scott! Wait a moment. What do you mean by that "besides" thing?

HORTENSE. I'm coming to that. First, we must settle this money question.

PETER. Do you want me to be a beastly beggar? (*From now on until end of play he gets his language mixed; one time using the broad English accent and then the more natural voice.*)

HORTENSE. Besides, Peter, you've never worked a day in your life. (*Impressively.*) You've simply got to go to work! (*PETER gasps and sinks limply into a chair.*)

GERALDINE (*delightedly*). Now you've spoken, Hortense. "Them" are great words.

PETER (*dismally*). First, I must give my money away, and then I must go to—to work. Holy smoke! (*GERALDINE nods her approval.*)

HORTENSE (*standing in front of PETER and laying it down*). Don't misunderstand me, Peter. I don't want you to be, as you term it, a "beastly beggar." But your money simply must do something in this world besides pile up and draw interest. Money is a wonderful thing, Peter, but only if it is in the proper hands. Be guided by those who have unselfishly given their all to charity. They will know the best way for you to invest it to bring happiness to others. (*Stops suddenly and laughs—abashed.*) I'm afraid I haven't had sufficient experience as yet to be really eloquent; but I do want to make my meaning clear, if I can.

GERALDINE. Couldn't have done better myself, sis.

PETER. By Jove, she's a regular Chautauqua talker, isn't she? Now I understand pretty well about my money. I don't give a hang for that. But going to work! Do you want me to be a bally grocery clerk, like Baldwin?

GERALDINE. No, she can't expect the impossible Peter. Baldwin is a wonderful grocery clerk.

HORTENSE (*chidingly*). Now, now, Geraldine. To repeat your own words, "give him a chance." Look at Baldwin. Could anybody ever have pictured him as a grocery clerk?

GERALDINE. Yes, and a good one, too.

PETER (*rising, thrusts hands in his trousers pockets and paces thoughtfully to and fro. Finally stops and faces the girls with a manly bearing and voice.*) Girls, you're right. (*They start with glad surprise.*) Oh, it has been coming on me—this thing—for the past few weeks. I could see the

change for the good in you and the other folks in this house. I could see it even without the aid of that—(*points at monocle on table*). I could see where I had been *all* wrong. Our talk this evening clinches it. Girls, I am under orders. Lead me to it. (*Salaams to them. The girls applaud his speech by an enthusiastic clapping of their hands.*)

GERALDINE. Positively the greatest speech I ever heard.

HORTENSE (*kissing him*). Peter, that shows I am proud of you.

PETER (*overwhelmed, relapses into his English manner*). My word! What an astounding ovation! (*Suddenly realizes his mistake, straightens quickly to an erect attitude and slaps his chest violently.*) Ladies, I humbly beg your pardon. I shall be more careful in the future. Now, Hortense, I'm going to ask something in return for my sacrifices. A little music. (*GERALDINE makes a face. PETER goes to piano.*)

HORTENSE (*appealingly*). No, no, Peter—not that!

PETER. Why not?

HORTENSE. Just as you were “all wrong” with your ideas, I have been “all wrong” with my music. Please don't ask me.

PETER (*looking over music on piano rack*). Well, I liked it. I'll tell you what. You play and I'll sing. (*HORTENSE and GERALDINE make wry faces.*) You know, in that way, one crime will offset the other. Now, come on. I shall sing.

GERALDINE. Don't rub it in, Peter.

HORTENSE (*rising and going to piano*). To please you, Peter. But no ragtime, mind you.

PETER. No, not if you say so. Here's a favorite song of mine. (*He hands her sheet of music. To GERALDINE.*) Come on, Geraldine, you're in on this. (*GERALDINE smiles and joins him at piano.*) Now go ahead. Make it good and loud when we hit the chorus. (*The song PETER has selected should be some old favorite or a simple ballad, one affording good harmony for their voices. They sing verse and chorus in creditable manner, but as they repeat chorus, PETER “gets off the key” and the finish is a ludicrous dis-*

cord. HORTENSE rises quickly from piano stool and GERALDINE stops cars with tips of fingers.)

HORTENSE. Oh, Peter, Peter; how could you?

PETER (*ruefully*). I don't know. I guess I must have slipped. (*Eagerly.*) But let's try it again. Nothing like practice, you know.

GERALDINE. No, no—once was plenty.

Enter MRS. BEVERLY from L.

MRS. B. (*with servile bow*). Dinner is served, ladies. (*To PETER, heartily.*) And you, too, Peter. I've made a place for you; so hurry along. Where's Polly and Baldwin? Not come yet?

HORTENSE. No, mother; not yet. (*Smiles.*) Give them a chance.

MRS. B. (*smiles knowingly*). I understand. But come along. We can't wait. My dinner'll be cold. (*PETER gaily places himself between girls and they cross to L.*)

GERALDINE (*to MRS. B.*). Oh, mother, we have something to tell you about Peter.

HORTENSE. It's perfectly wonderful!

GERALDINE. You'll never be able to believe it, but it's true.

PETER. I'm to be a jolly beggar and go to work.

MRS. B. Well, tell me all about it between the soup and the salad. Come along.

They exeunt L. As they are well off, enter POLLY and BALDWIN, C. D. BALDWIN is attired in a neat business suit. He tosses his hat on a chair, then very carefully reaches a hand in an inside pocket and brings out a pay envelope. He holds it up and eyes it proudly.

BALDWIN. There, Polly; look! My pay envelope, seal unbroken. I wanted you to be the first to see the first dollar I ever earned. (*Extends it to her.*)

POLLY (*slowly reaching a hand for it and then reverently taking it*). My, isn't it just too wonderful! (*Hesitates to open it, fingering it curiously.*) And you—you want me to open it?

BALDWIN (*softly*). Yes, Polly—please.

POLLY (*tears open envelope and gazes wonderingly within*). My, what a lot of money! (*They both look in envelope, awe-stricken.*)

BALDWIN (*proudly*). Two weeks salary—twelve per week—twenty-four dollars.

POLLY (*extracts the bills, runs them over, counting them; looks at bills and then at him and recounts money*). Hum! Some mistake, Baldwin.

BALDWIN (*startled*). Hey? Say, I'm not "shy" am I?

POLLY. No; you've got more here than you—why, there's twenty-eight dollars here, Baldwin. (*They look at each other in amazement.*)

BALDWIN (*takes money and counts it*). Twenty-eight dollars! Now what do you make of that?

POLLY (*thoughtful pause, suddenly*). I have it. They've given you a raise.

BALDWIN. No! (*puzzled—finally*). Wait! I have it. (*Excitedly and rapidly.*) It's what happened today. Mrs. Feather-Stone, personally conducted by Mrs. Chadfield, made a tour of our store. She'd never let me wait on her before. Today all the other clerks were busy. She had to come to me. When I finished she graciously thanked me for my courteous efforts, saying she had never before received better attention from any sales person. When she was going out she talked to Mr. Wetherby. She must have eulogized me—that's the answer. She's the cause of the twenty-eight instead of the twenty-four. Can you believe it, Polly? Mrs. Feather-Stone!

POLLY (*softly repeating*). Mrs. Feather-Stone! Bless her heart! Oh, Baldwin, I'm so proud of you.

BALDWIN (*hangs head in confusion and scrapes floor with tip of shoe*). Oh, cut it out, Polly! (*Suddenly raises head—proudly.*) But I haven't started yet. Just you watch me. I know the stock and prices of everything. There's only one thing I haven't grasped yet.

POLLY (*anxiously*). What's that, Baldwin?

BALDWIN. Those confounded self-computing weighing machines. They've got me whipped.

POLLY (*laughs—quickly*). Oh, we're forgetting all about dinner. And your mother's made a delicious shortcake, too.

BALDWIN. Eat? Say, I'm too happy to eat. Eat, with twenty-eight large dollars I've earned all by myself? Not so's you can notice it. Eat? Well, not when you've given me the right to do this. (*Kisses her. His arms are about her and they assume a loving attitude. Doorbell off C. D. rings, but they apparently do not hear it.*)

Enter MARIE from L. in answer to bell. She discovers them in their fond embrace and stops abruptly halfway between L. exit and C. D. Bell rings again.

MARIE (*apologetically*). Ahem! I beg your pardon; but someone's at the door. (*They are still oblivious of her presence.*) I—I really do have to beg your pardon, ye know. The doorbell rung twice now—bad cess to it!

BALDWIN (*slowly raising head and gazing at MARIE in surprise*). Oh! Did you wish something, Mary? (*POLLY frees herself from BALDWIN's embrace and stands aside, abashed.*)

MARIE (*confusedly*). Yes, sir; no, sir; I mean. But there's somebody at the door.

BALDWIN. Oh, certainly. That could happen, couldn't it? Most natural thing in the world, I suppose. (*Crossly.*) But why anybody should come and ring the bell just at this particular moment, is the puzzling thing. See who it is, Mary.

MARIE. Yes, sir. (*Hastily exits C. D.*)

BALDWIN. As Geraldine says, "There's always somebody to knock the joy out of life."

POLLY (*arranging her hair*). Baldwin, you've mussed my hair terribly.

BALDWIN. Say, Polly, that isn't a marker to what you've done to my heart. Put your head down here and listen to it. (*He tries to draw her head down to his breast, but she evades him.*)

Enter MARIE, noisily, followed by PUDGY and TOMMY. The children are now decidedly "dressed" up.

MARIE (*pompously announcing*). Miss Pudgy Tompkins, Master Tommy Tompkins! (*POLLY and BALDWIN whirl simultaneously and face C. D. POLLY, with a glad cry, rushes to caress the children.*)

BALDWIN. Well, look who's here! Come right in. Miss Tompkins and Mr. Tompkins. (*He fondles children, MARIE smiles indulgently.*)

MARIE (*admiringly*). My, but don't they look swell.

BALDWIN. They sure do. (*Gazes critically at their faces and hands.*) And you don't need any soap and water today, do you? You know, the last time you called, I ruined a perfectly good pair of gloves on your account.

POLLY (*reprovingly*). Baldwin! That isn't a nice thing to say. (*He grins. POLLY scats the children.*) Tell me, Pudgy, how's mother and father?

PUDGY. They're very well, thank you.

TOMMY. And my pa's working, he is.

BALDWIN (*to TOMMY*). Wait a minute, Tommy. Are you sure your father's working?

TOMMY. Sure he is—every day.

BALDWIN (*to POLLY*). Say, if you've got *him* working—good night! (*Throws up both hands in comic dismay.*)

MARIE. Sure, she's a wonder.

POLLY. It is nothing to exclaim over, I'm sure. Soon as ever he discovered the true happiness to be enjoyed from a day's work, the rest was easy.

BALDWIN. And the joy punch contained in a pay envelope, eh?

PUDGY (*slides from her chair, clasps TOMMY's hand. They pose for inspection. To BALDWIN.*) Say, this is the first time you have ever seen us in our society clothes, ain't it?

TOMMY. Yes, you'd better give us the once-over, so's you'll have a good run fer yer money. (*They strut proudly about, while the others look on in enjoyment.*)

MARIE (*with deep feeling*). Faith, I can't look at the little darlings any longer. My—my throat is getting all clogged up. (*Turns away and dabs at her eyes with handkerchief.*)

PUDGY (*to TOMMY, severely*). Now see what you've done. You made that funny-talking lady cry.

TOMMY (*looking at MARIE an instant, going to her and grasping her hand*). Please, lady, I didn't mean to. (*MARIE turns swiftly and gathers TOMMY in her arms.*)

Enter MRS. B. from L. She has discarded the apron. Stops abruptly as she discovers the children.

MRS. B. Well, bless my soul and body! You little darlings. (*Gathers both children to her and into a motherly embrace. BALDWIN smiles at POLLY, and she, much affected, turns away to hide her emotion.*)

BALDWIN (*to MRS. B., with mock anxiety*). Don't hurt them, mother.

MRS. B. Not for the world. (*She kneels on floor with children before her and engages them in conversation. MARIE stands alongside, smiling indulgently.*)

BALDWIN (*aside to POLLY*). Say, what's the matter? You look like a couple of funerals.

POLLY (*turning to him*). Oh, I am so happy!

BALDWIN. Can you beat that? When a woman is happy, she cries. When she is sad, she cries, only not so hard.

Enter BEVERLY from L., followed by HORTENSE, GERALDINE and PETER. BEVERLY is in Tuxedo suit.

BEVERLY. Hello, what's all this? (*Advances to fondle the children.*)

PETER. Well, if it isn't my little old pals. (*Goes to children.*)

HORTENSE. My, oh, my! What a surprise!

GERALDINE (*to children*). And where did you get all the nice things, bless your hearts!

PUDGY (*indicating BALDWIN*). Him.

TOMMY. He's some Santa Claus when he gets started.

MRS. B. (*meaningly*). Some folks around here are too busy to eat, but you're not, are you? (*They shake their heads vigorously.*) I thought not. Well, all my nice things are not going to waste. You come with me. (*Takes each by a hand. To MARIE.*) Come, Mary. I shall need your

assistance. These children have "some" appetites. (MRS. B., MARIE and the children cross to L., turn at exit and the children bow and the four exeunt. The others wave their adieus.)

BEVERLY (to BALDWIN). Well, young man. What do you mean by being late for your dinner?

BALDWIN. Father, I have the best excuse in the world. (Indicates POLLY.)

POLLY (laughingly). I suppose I must take the blame—and I am going to get my dinner. Come on, Baldwin. If some folks don't know enough to eat their dinners, we'll do it for them. (She starts for exit L.)

BALDWIN. Wait, Polly. (She turns expectantly.) Aren't you going to tell the folks—something?

POLLY. Oh, gracious! What a selfish creature I am. Baldwin is far too modest to tell you of his great exploits, so suppose I must. He got a raise. Mind you, a raise, unsolicited.

BEVERLY (incredulously). No!

PETER. Impossible! (Forgets himself.) My word!

GERALDINE. Oh!

HORTENSE. Good gracious!

POLLY. It's true. (BALDWIN nods emphatically.)

BEVERLY (to BALDWIN). You scamp! I always knew 'twas in you. How did it happen?

POLLY. He waited on Mrs. Feather-Stone with such admirable courtesy, don't you know, that before she left (mimics MRS. FEATHER-STONE'S lofty manner) she complimented him very highly to Mr. Wetherby. (They all line up at either side of BALDWIN and stare at him as if he were some strange creature. Comedy picture.)

BALDWIN (finally draws money from pocket and proudly displays it to the awe-struck group). Twenty-eight large American dollars! Think of it, folks! (They now transfer their gaze from him to the money he is holding on high. Another picture. GERALDINE and HORTENSE throw their arms about his neck and kiss him effusively, while his father clasps his hand and wrings it vigorously.)

PETER (to BALDWIN, after they separate). Twenty-eight

dollars! And you—you earned it? (*Impressively.*) You lucky dog. (*They all laugh.*) I say, Baldwin, can I get a job in your store? (*Again they laugh, but he is perfectly serious.*)

BALDWIN. Say, Peter, are you spoofing me?

PETER. Never more serious in all my life, young man.

HORTENSE (*to* BALDWIN). No, Baldwin, Peter is in deadly earnest.

GERALDINE. Haven't you noticed anything wrong—I mean, new and startling about him?

BALDWIN (*after a critical survey*). No—o, I can't say as I have. What's the matter with him? (*Anxiously.*) He's not been trying to think, has he?

GERALDINE (*picks up monocle from table and dangles it by thread*). This is one thing, Baldwin. He's divorced this.

HORTENSE. And his speech—haven't you noticed?

PETER (*in manly tone*). Confound it! What's the use?

BALDWIN (*stares—grasps PETER by hand*). Pete, old man, get in! (*Vigorously shakes PETER's hand, forcing him to wince.*)

BEVERLY (*to* BALDWIN, *teasingly*). Son, what are you going to do with all that money?

BALDWIN. Pay my board—and my debts.

BEVERLY. By George, it remained for strangers to discover there was something in you. Now, see here, young man. If this Wetherby man considers you worth \$14 per week, I consider you worth \$25 per week to me. Understand that? (*Crosses to L. exits, turns.*) You start in tomorrow morning. And if you're late—(*makes a threatening gesture*). Now come on to dinner. (*POLLY places a hand on BALDWIN's arm and smiles up into his face.*)

PETER (*to* BEVERLY *anxiously*). I say, Mr. Beverly, don't you want an office boy?

BEVERLY. By Jove, yes! That's the kind of stuff I like to hear. You may report also. But I warn you—business is business. (*He smiles and exits.*)

HORTENSE (*crossing to L. exit*). Come on, folks. I'm nearly famished, and I know mother is out of patience by this time. (*Exits L.*)

GERALDINE (*following HORTENSE*). Come along, Peter. Remember, you have to get down early and sweep out the office. (*Exits.*)

PETER (*following her, turns at exit*). I don't want to be a fussie or anything, but don't you folks ever eat? (*Exits.*)

BALDWIN (*to POLLY, puckering up his lips*). Just one, Polly?

POLLY. Why, Baldwin—no!

BALDWIN. Oh, come on. What's a little thing like a kiss—between sweethearts? (*She hesitates.*) Stingy!

POLLY. Well—just one.

BALDWIN. And now, as they say in story books, little remains to be told. Polly and Baldwin were married and lived happily ever afterward—all on account of Polly. (*Off stage, PETER, HORTENSE and GERALDINE sing in perfect harmony the chorus of "Love's Old Sweet Song." All stage lights are suddenly turned out. POLLY and BALDWIN are seen with faces and lips close together as the spot-light is thrown on them. They hold picture until chorus off stage is finished, à la moving picture climax.*)

CURTAIN.

Mrs. Tubbs of Shantytown

By WALTER BEN HARE.

Price, 25 Cents

Comedy-drama in 3 acts; 4 males, 7 females (5 are children). Time, 2¼ hours. **Scene:** 1 interior. **Characters:** Mrs. Tubbs, the sunshine of Shantytown. Miss Clingie Vine, her lady boarder, real genteel. Mrs. Hickey, a neighbor who hates gossip. Maydelle Campbell, the young school teacher. Simon Rubbels, the corner grocery man. Tom Riordan, the census taker. Queenie, aged twelve. Methusalem, aged eleven. Billy, aged seven. Victoria, aged three. Elmira, aged ten.

SYNOPSIS.

Act I.—Mrs. Mollie Tubbs and her happy little family in Shantytown. The pretty, young school teacher and the Census Taker have a disagreement. Mrs. Tubbs as first aid to Cupid. Mrs. Hickey expresses her opinion of Simon Rubbels. Miss Clingie Vine has her census taken. "My maw was a Virginia Hamm, and whenever we had company, papaw always wore full evening garbage." Bad news from Kansas. "There ain't no way too far for a mother's love. I'm going to my boy."

Act II.—A month later. Mrs. Tubbs returns. Simon Rubbels decides to find a wife. "If he ain't a red-headed hippopotamus, there never was one on this green earth." A Shantytown high jinks with song and menagerie. Clingie Vine decides to be a siren. The light in the window for Jimmie. "I've got my babies, and I've got their love, and all the money in the world can't take that from me, so Mr. Simon Rubbels, the honorable Mrs. Tubbs respectfully declines your offer of matrimony."

Act III.—A Shantytown Thanksgiving. Mrs. Hickey brings the news and Miss Vine inherits a fortune. Mr. Rubbels worries Mrs. Tubbs again. "You kin turn me out in the streets tomorrow, but tonight this house belongs to me. Now there's the door and there's your hat. I won't detain you no longer." Miss Vine and the good looking grocery boy. "Jimmie, my boy, my boy!" The return of the Prodigal Son. "I reckon I'm the happiest woman in the United States of America. My cup runneth over, my cup runneth over!"

MRS. TUBBS SAYS:

"Clingie's certainly a long time makin' up her mind, but when she's sot a steam shovel himself couldn't unset her."

"I hope and I trust; and when a person hopes and trusts fer a thing they ginerally git it. Everything is bound to come out right some time."

"I ain't goin' to worry. There ain't no use in h'istin' your umbrella until it begins to rain."

"I jest do what I have to do and make the best of it. Mr. Tubbs used to say that my voice would scare anything, so I jest try to make it scare the blues."

"Bibulous? Bibulous, Theodore Tubbs, bibulous? Why, mister, that man didn't know no more about the Bible than my sister's cat's tail. And what's more, I ain't got no sister."

"Men is men the hull world over, and it seems jest like it's a man's nature to do that which they oughtn't to do, and to leave undone them things they ought to have did. That's Scripture."

"What difference does money make? If you've got your youth and your strength and your love, that's worth all the money that was ever made in this whole world."

"Love your country and stand up fer it to the last ditch. Poor folks can love their country jest the same as rich ones. And better."

"Keep smiling."

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY, Publishers
154 W. Randolph Street, CHICAGO

Savageland

By WALTER BEN HARE.

Price, 50 Cents

Musical comedy in 2 acts; 5 males, 5 females and chorus. Time, 2½ hours. **Scenes:** 2 exteriors. **Characters:** Jake Heinz, the fifty-ninth variety. Sherlocko Combs, a defective detective. Buckskin Buddy, from Savageland. Gilroy Clay, in love. Big Chief Heap Much Scalpem. Marigold Lee, the Quaker maid. Daffodil Dotty, poetess of passion. Birdie Magoogin, the Irish Cinderella. Ysobel, in vaudeville. Wee-nah, the marble lady. Contains nine catchy songs: "Summer Girls," "Fair Quaker Maid," "The Modest Blossom," "Letter Song," "Ho, for the West," "He Never Came Back Again," "The Little Birch Canoe," "The Message of the Red, Red Rose" and "Twinkle Doodle Dum." Five of the songs are set to original music by Henry Bethuel Vincent. The remainder are sung to familiar college airs. The foundation of the plot is laughter, carefree, a bit of satire, a touch of sentiment, which combined, will make you understand that life's a merry jest in Savageland. Detailed directions given with each musical number for the arrangement of the chorus, marching, stage pictures, etc.

First produced by The Savage Club at Cornell University. Suitable for any occasion and especially recommended for college and high school productions.

SYNOPSIS.

Act I.—The Summer Girls and the Little Quaker Maid. Sherlocko Combs, the wonderful detective, searching for a missing heiress. "She's worth a million, has a green shamrock tatooed on her right wrist and wears a No. 10 shoe." Buckskin Buddy from Savageland looks for the detective. A missing pitcher of pearls. Sherlocko on the trail. Jake Heinz, the fifty-ninth variety, becomes a Doctor Watson. Clay finds that the course of true love never did run smoothly. Miss Daffodil Dotty, the poetess of passion, has an inspiration. The Cowboy and the Lady. "Ho, for the West!" A living statue. Birdie Magoogin's story. The new cook shows her temper. Jake Heinz, on the trail, proves himself a hero. Jake finds the missing heiress and wins her for his bride. "Then hit the trail for Savageland, three thousand miles away!"

Act II.—In the Savage Mountains. Jake and Birdie on their honeymoon. The automatic carbuncle of the automobile explodes. "Ye should have used soothing syrup instead of gasoline." The Duchess Heinz entertains with a green tea. The Scotch Laird of Kilkuse. "Hoot, mon, hoot!" "He talks like an owl—because he's from the owld country." Music lessons in Savageland. "He has a cadenza like a flamingo and warbles like an aurora borealis!" Marigold realizes that the old love is the best love. The Yaki Indians and their Chief, Heap Much Scalpem. A pipe of peace. The Chief throws dust and declares war. The missing Goddess of Love. Sherlocko exposed. The storm in the mountains. Lightning strikes an old tree, it falls apart and discloses the goddess, Wee-nah. "The wonderful Sherlocko never fails."

"A capacity audience at the Lyceum Theater last night was given two hours of unalloyed fun with the Savages in 'Savageland' and many were the regrets when Wee-nah was discovered and there was nothing left to do but to return to Ithaca and the workaday world."—Ithaca Evening News.

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY, Publishers
154 W. Randolph Street, CHICAGO

The Thread of Destiny

By LINDSEY BARBEE.

Price, 25 Cents

Comedy-drama of the Civil War in 3 acts; 9 males, 16 females. Time, 2½ hours. **Scenes:** 1 interior, 2 exteriors. **Characters:** Peyton Bailey, of the U. S. army. Beverly Montgomery, a confederate scout. Colonel Montgomery, a gentleman of the old school. Tom Randolph, a Southern gallant. John Morton, of the North. Ralph, who did not go to war. George and Uncle Billy, slaves. A Union Scout. Virginia, the toast of the country. Betty, the "Little Colonel." Edith, a northern cousin. Louise, a spy. Eight charming southern girls. Mrs. Montgomery. Miss Melissy, of inquisitive nature. Fanny and Mammy, slaves.

SYNOPSIS.

Act I.—Betty breaks a looking glass. Edith calms her fears and tells her "the signs of the times." "Virginia has seceded." Beverly enlists. "A Virginia woman does not even recognize an acquaintance among the enemies of Virginia."

Act II.—"I don' wan' no tarnished silber linin' to my cloud." "There are some things more precious than money, than jewels." "Death cannot conquer love—nor eternity." "Some day there will be no North, no South, but the Union." The Union scout falls a prey to Edith's fascinations and her cleverness wins the coveted dispatch. Virginia opens the door—to Peyton. Beverly is discovered. Friendship proves stronger than duty.

Act III.—Three years work a great change. Peyton pleads in vain. George and Fanny "take de road to de lan' of happiness." "In our little circle the stars and bars are floating high." Virginia gives Peyton another rose and together they trace against the background of blue and gray "the golden thread of destiny."

Shadows

By MARY MONCURE PARKER.

Price, 15 Cents

Play of the South today and a dream of the past in 1 act; an interior scene; 3 males, 4 females. Time, 35 minutes. **Characters:** Prologue and the Awakening: Robert Ashton, Virginia's sweetheart. Aunt Geranium, an old colored mammy. Virginia Lee, a southern maid. **The Dream:** Gordon Sanford, a soldier in love with Alice. Harold Hale, the successful rival. Mrs. Horace Fairfax, a stern mother of long ago. Alice Fairfax, her dutiful daughter.

STORY OF THE PLAY.

Virginia Lee's mother insists upon her marriage with a rich suitor, who has agreed to restore their impoverished estate. Virginia has a sweetheart of her childhood days and hesitates in making a choice, but finally decides upon wealth instead of love. An old colored mammy, who has spent her life in the Lee household, understands the situation and tells Virginia of a similar episode in the life of Virginia's grandmother. Virginia in pondering over the incident and grieving over her own troubles, falls asleep. She dreams of the story just told and the dream folks appear and play their parts. Virginia awakens, the shadows flee and she comes to her senses and her lover.

The old colored mammy says: "Dis heah ole worl's jes' full of shadders. Fokes comes an' dey goes, ripens and drops like the fruit on de tree. Ole Mars is gone, old Mistis gone. De substance melts and fades away. Ain't nothing left but shadders."

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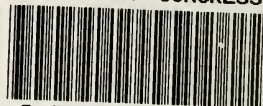


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